■ SPORTS / A29

Viloria keeps WBC light fly title

■ NEWS / A4

Edsa docu: Gringo didn't have People Power in mind

■ BUSINESS / B1

HSBC's fearless forecast: P47.50 to $1

■ ENTERTAINMENT / A2-8

Funny 'Mega Valentine'

Amsterdam hookers hold red light district 'open house'

KAKAIBANG TOURIST ATTRACTION.. LIBRE PA!

AMSTERDAM'S FAMED red light district held its first ever "open day" on Saturday as its peep shows and brothels gave crowds of wide-eyed visitors free entry to help shed the area's increasingly negative reputation.

Armed with a list of 25

AMSTERDAM/ A20

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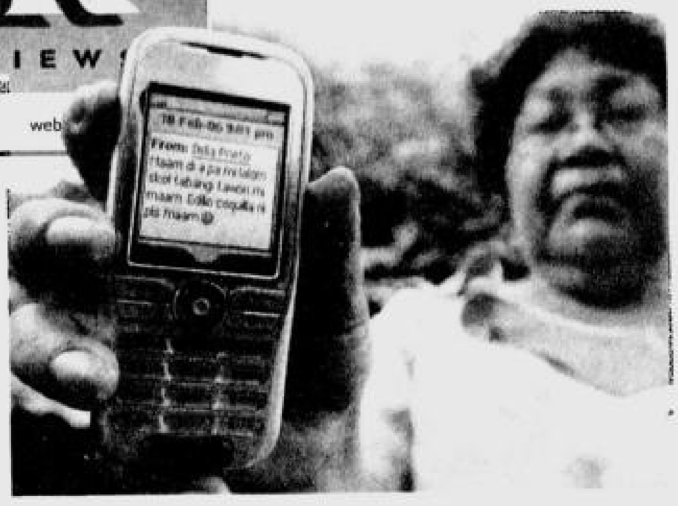
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Monday, February 20, 2006 ★★ 5 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 74 P18

FORWARDED text message from the rubble: "Ma'am, we are still under the school. Please help us, ma'am. This is Edilio Coquilla. Please ma'am."

EDWIN BACASMAS



Faint sign of life in buried school

Rescuers hear scratching, raise hopes for over 200 pupils

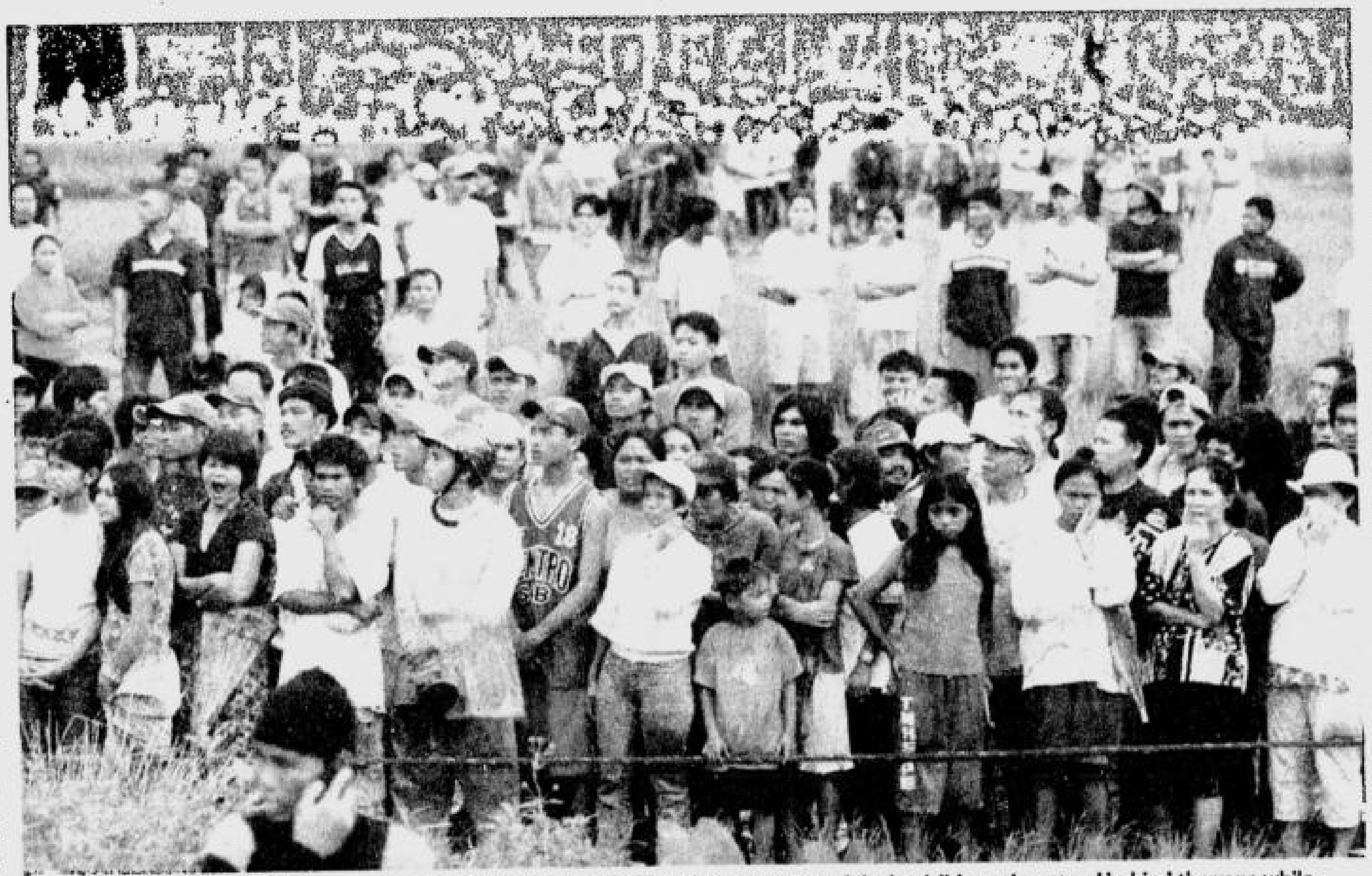
By Volt Contreras, Vicente Labro and Jani Arnaiz
PDI Visayas Bureau

ST. BERNARD, SOUTHern Leyte—Rescuers racing against time said yesterday they heard "scratches" indicating signs of life apparently coming from a schoolhouse buried in a landslide with over 200 children and teachers inside it.

The Guinsaugon Elementary School (GES) in this town had been the emotional focus of search and rescue operations after a deadly avalanche of mud and rocks swamped Barangay Guinsaugon and buried close to 2,000 people. Many of the villagers were feared killed.

"It went on for more than a minute. It was like a sheet of metal being scratched," mountaineer Lt. Rted Esguerra, a member of the Philippine Coast Guard medi-

FAINT SIGN/ A22



THE LONG ANXIOUS WAIT for word on the missing is what is killing these survivors of the landslide as they stand behind the rope while rescuers do the arduous work of finding survivors and recovering the dead. So far rescuers have found no survivors.

ROGER MARGALLO

Officials warn of more disasters

By Luige A. del Puerto

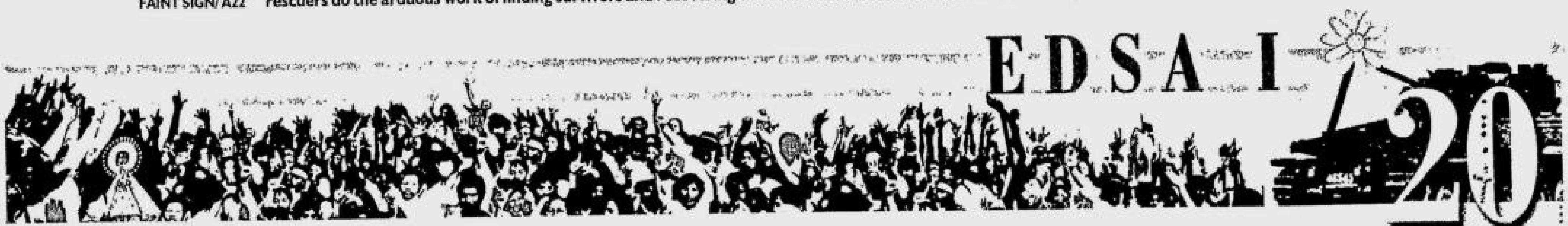
UNLESS AN EARLY WARNING system is set up to advise people living in flood- and landslide-prone areas, a disaster similar to what took place in St. Bernard town in Southern Leyte could hit the country's eastern seaboard again, the defense department warned yesterday.

"Over the next four months, there is the danger that this flooding and landslide will happen again ... These flood-prone and landslide-prone areas could be hit," Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz Jr. said.

The eastern seaboard refers to provinces that lie near the Philippine Sea and Pacific Ocean. They include Cagayan, Isabela, Quirino, Aurora, Quezon, the Bicol provinces, Samar and Leyte islands, Surigao and Agusan provinces and Davao Oriental.

Once La Niña comes, these areas would be the hardest hit, according to Dr. Graciano Yumul, chief of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astro-

OFFICIALS/ A20



STARTING TODAY, WE BEGIN OUR SERIES ON EDSA I IN CELEBRAtion of the 20th anniversary of those four days in February 1986 when we Filipinos revolted on a stretch of highway, and right there and then ousted the Marcos dictatorship without a single shot being fired, without a drop of blood being shed. We simply stunned the world, and inspired revolutions, Filipino style, in all nations still yearning to be free.

All credit goes to the Filipino people. Which is why we had asked them to write in their own personal stories of Edsa I, big and small, untold and retold ***(See below)***, because Edsa I, also known as the "real and only" Edsa, truly belongs to the Filipinos. Which is why it is also called the People Power Revolt.

It is also called a miracle. As if it were not miracle enough that the Filipinos after 14 years of strongman rule suddenly found their voice and the guts to regain their freedom. But they would be the first to shout it from the rooftops of the world that they did not do it alone. For, you see, in this Christian country, all the saints came marching in, too, led by the Blessed Virgin Mother borne on the shoulders of her flock.

To get an idea of the big picture, we also present what was happening on the other side of the Pasig River—Malacañang Palace—written by eyewitnesses to the last days of the crumbling Marcos empire. And the historic portrait would not be complete without a glimpse of the military's critical role in the downfall of Marcos. Except that it was probably the first time that "the protector of the people" was in fact being protected and saved by the warm bodies of the people at Edsa.

The series is dedicated to the 20somethings (about 52 million of you guys out there) who have no memory of our gloriously recent past. This memory is a moveable feast. Carry it with you wherever you go as a badge of honor and pride of being Filipino. *LJM*

THE PEOPLE

Rage with a heart

By **Benjamin Vallejo Jr.**

(The writer is assistant professor in the UP College of Science.)

THE EARLY AND MID 1980S WERE SIGNIficant for many of us, what fellow congener Jessica Zafra called the Voltes V generation. Those times coincided with our entry to adulthood and political maturity and the phenomenal rise of Japanese Animé.

In 1983, we were junior high school students who were on a field trip for our mythology class. On this rather uneventful Aug. 21, we heard on the way back to Manila that Benigno (Ninoy) Aquino had been shot!

Six years before, as grade three kids, my Araling Panlipunan (Social Studies) teacher asked us if Aquino was a bad man. The class responded "yes." This was at the height of martial law. And our teacher said, "Oh my poor martial law babies."

But on that August day, we knew who Aquino was, but were quite hazy on the freedom he was going to lay down his life for.

RAGE/ A25

THE MILITARY

'I chose to be there'

By **Angelo T. Reyes**

(The writer is now DENR secretary.)

I WAS A FULL COLONEL IN THE ARMED Forces assigned as a senior military assistant to Prime Minister Cesar Virata on Feb. 22, 1986.

Right there and then, I knew I had to make a personal decision whether to join the rebel forces or to align myself in defense of an administration that had lost the moral ascendancy to govern after stealing the results of the 1986 election.

As senior vice president of the AFP-RSBS (Retirement, Separation Benefits System) at the time, I was not in command of any combat unit then. Thus, I knew that whatever I chose to do would not in any way decide the outcome of the very tense standoff and the fate of the Filipino nation.

Oh how wrong I was to think that way! Mistaken because if every single person who went to Edsa thought of how inconsequential one man's contribution could be, then there would not have been a throng of people in and around Camp Crame and

I CHOSE/ A25

THE PALACE

Where's makeup artist?

By **Fernando del Mundo**

NO SHOT HAD YET BEEN FIRED, BUT when Hermie Rivera faced the wrong end of an assault rifle in the Palace corridor he thought he would be the first casualty of the 1986 People Power revolution.

Rivera's confrontation with the Galil-wielding son of President Ferdinand Marcos followed his father's decision to go on national television to reassure the world he would not attack the rebels.

A trusted press officer with full access to the inner Palace sanctum, Rivera had arranged for Marcos' television address hours after Washington had warned of dire consequences if the President mounted an offensive.

Ferdinand Marcos Jr., nicknamed Bongbong, had opposed his father's decision taken on the second day of the breakaway by rebellious Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile and Gen. Fidel Ramos, the Armed Forces deputy chief of staff.

WHERE'S/ A28

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: N. and E. Luzon will have cloudy skies with scattered rains. Visayas and Mindanao will have cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms. Frequent rains over S. Mindanao may cause flashfloods and landslides. The rest will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers.

COMPILED BY CYRIL L. BONABENTE, PDI RESEARCH/02/20/06 SOURCE PAGASA

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

Second FRONTPAGE

Text us your feedback: inquirer news name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

Bomb found at PMA after rites

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—THE MILITARY IS INVESTIGATING the reported discovery of a bomb at the Philippine Military Academy on Saturday night amid fresh rumors of a destabilization plot against the administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

The explosive device, loaded with about 2 kg of TNT, was found by members of PMA's military police unit hidden in a clutch bag at the PMA grandstand, hours after the academy held its alumni homecoming.

President Arroyo, who was said to be the target of a protest at the academy, skipped the gathering after the fresh coup plot was revealed. She sent her daughter Luli to the annual reunion instead.

A PMA official said the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (Isafp) had started investigating how the bag containing the TNT could have been left at the grandstand.

The explosive was turned over to Isafp agents here by PMA officials, said the official, who asked not to be identified.

Reports about the bomb circulated around Baguio at 10 p.m. Saturday but PMA officials denied a bomb had been found on the academy's premises.

Lt. Gen. Leopoldo Maligalig, PMA superintendent, scored the report that was initially released by Reuters.

"*Mali, mali ang mga* reports (Those are all wrong reports)," he said in a telephone interview on Sunday.

"We have no knowledge of any [bomb found at the grandstand]," said Col. Ricardo Nepomuceno, PMA spokesperson.

The homecoming, which was attended by more than 1,300 alumni and their families, drew attention last week after Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez revealed that the reunion would be the springboard for a new coup attempt.

Gonzalez based his information on a document called "Oplan Hackle" that was supposedly recovered from the locker of an Oakwood mutineer.

The military and police top brass and government officials attended the homecoming.

Senior Supt. Isagani Nerez, Baguio police director, said they were not informed about the supposed discovery of the bomb.

"If the report is true, the PMA also has its own explosives disposal unit, so it can best determine whether [the explosives] were meant to be [used for a terror attack]," he said.

Nerez, a member of PMA "Maharlika" Class 1984, was instructed to secure the academy during the reunion on Saturday.

On March 18, 1987, a bomb which could have been intended for then President Corazon Aquino, who was to grace that year's graduation rites, exploded at the PMA grandstand, killing four and injuring 47 others.

PMA officials and alumni had described the bombing as a desecration of Borromeo Field, where alumni homecoming parades are traditionally held.

Earlier this week, Reuters, quoting two senior generals, reported details of a plot to unseat and possibly assassinate Ms Arroyo.

The plan involved the mass escape of mutineers originally set for January, hostage-taking at the weekend gathering of military commanders at the PMA, the occupation of military camps and the removal Ms Arroyo from office.

Talk of a plot by some elements of the military has been spreading since the escape from an army camp in January of four leaders of the Magdalo group of mutineers who staged a one-day mutiny in Makati City in July 2003. *With Reuters*

Elite PNP unit denies hand in plot

By Luige A. del Puerto

THE CHIEF OF AN ELITE COMbat unit of the Philippine National Police yesterday vowed to thwart any moves to destabilize the Arroyo administration even as he denied rumors that his men were involved in any such plots.

The PNP-Special Action Force "will thwart any action by any group that poses a threat to the state and to disrupt the normal activities and functions of government," SAF Chief Supt. Marcelino Franco Jr. warned.

The SAF is the most seasoned fighting unit of the police. Last year, it stormed a jail in Bicutan, Taguig City, when Abu Sayyaf detainees seized control of the facility in a botched attempt to escape. More than 22 detainees were killed in the ensuing firefight.

"In my humble capacity as director of the PNP-SAF, once and for all in order to allay the apprehensions of the public, I categorically deny any involvement of my unit in any unlawful or unauthorized action outside of the chain of command," Franco said.

"The PNP-SAF is a professional police unit. We will never engage in any action beyond our mandate to enforce the law, to maintain peace and order, and to defend the republic against enemies of the state," he said.

Early this year, an intelligence officer disclosed that people seeking to destabilize the government had approached several police commanders, including at least one officer of the PNP-SAF, to lure them into breaking the chain of command.

But they were rebuffed by the commanders, the intelligence officer said.

Franco said his men were all accounted for.

"All SAF units are under the effective control of responsible and trustworthy officers with proven integrity and unquestionable loyalty," he said, adding that the PNP-SAF's "solidarity as a fighting unit is indivisible."

According to Franco, SAF had fought countless battles in the fiercest campaigns against groups making a mockery of the country's laws, including those seeking to wrest control of the government.

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ASUS HEART OF TECHNOLOGY

Ermita, Bunye to face senators today over budgets

By TJ Burgonio

BARRING ANY HITCHES, EXECutive Secretary Eduardo Ermita and Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye will appear at today's Senate hearing on the P1.053-trillion 2006 budget, to the delight of some senators.

Ermita and Bunye had confirmed their attendance at the Senate committee of the whole hearing on the budgets of the Office of the President and the Office of the Press Secretary, a committee staff member said.

"It augurs well for our constitutional democracy and for our nation," Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan said.

"It's good for our work. We can continue doing our inquiry. We'll be able to question these officials on how they disposed of the money allocated to them in the previous year," Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said in an interview.

The attendance of the two Cabinet members comes a week after fresh hostilities erupted between Malacañang and the Senate over Executive Order No. 464, with senators asking the Supreme Court to stop President Macapagal-Arroyo from enforcing the order.

The latest row was triggered by the nonappearance of Bunye and officials of the Department of Interior and Local Government at the Senate budget hearing on Feb. 8. The officials had invoked EO 464.

The order bars administration, police and military officials from appearing in congressional hearings without the President's approval. It has been a major flashpoint for confrontation between the two branches of government since September.

Sen. Joker Arroyo, for his part, said he would question Ermita and other government officials on why they allowed the National Power Corp. to pay its officers and employees some P12 billion in separation pay in 2005 and then rehired them.

"Why did they not question it?" he said in an interview.

Pimentel, however, said the appearance of Ms Arroyo's top Cabinet men at the budget hearings "was not good enough," insisting that she revoke EO 464.

"While Gloria appears to be loosening up, she might tighten up next time around. So we can't say 'all's well that ends well,'" he said. "Unless she repeals EO 464, it will be far from saying that we're doing things according to the Constitution."

Pangilinan said the Cabinet men's presence at the hearing would not in any way affect the urgent motion filed by 17 senators on Feb. 10 asking the high tribunal to resolve their application for a TRO against EO 464.

After Garci, House set to probe gov't agencies

By Michael Lim Ubac

AFTER ITS CELEBRATED BUT fruitless "Hello Garci" wiretapping inquiry, the House of Representatives is buckling down to work, preparing to investigate underperforming government agencies.

The House oversight committee has set its sights on the financial state of the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp. (PDIC) which had incurred heavy losses, defeating its mandate to provide financial assistance to distressed banks, according to House Majority Leader Prospero C. Nograles.

The Davao lawmaker said yesterday the oversight committee chair, Rep. Danilo Suarez, had scheduled the inquiry for next week.

Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero Pichay Jr. also asked the House committee on good government to investigate the Department of Budget and Management's role in bidding out government procurement contracts from textbooks and Armed Forces supplies to hospital equipment by virtue of a Marcos-era directive.

Pichay said the joint congressional committee on the Government Procurement Reform Act (Republic Act No. 9184) should check whether the setup was one contemplated by the act, which mandates the "procuring agency" to conduct the bidding and issue of the notice of award through its Bids and Awards Committee.

The DBM, which releases the funds, cannot influence the choice of the winning bidder, lest it be accused of conflict of interest, according to Pichay.

On the PDIC's financial mess, Nograles said the oversight committee also wanted to find out if the agency should be abolished.

"Is the PDIC performing its functions well or has it become a liability to the government?" he said.

Nograles endorsed the resolution filed by Rep. Hermilando Mandanas of Batangas urging Congress to look into the current financial status of the PDIC.

As a rule, PDIC sources the funds it leads to problematic banks by borrowing from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP).

The Mandanas resolution cited a Commission on Audit report in December 2004 that said loans extended by the BSP to PDIC amounted to P80.724 billion (almost two-thirds of the BSP's outstanding loan portfolio of P124.48 billion), which represents 94 percent of the outstanding liabilities of PDIC.

In the same report, Nograles noted that the BSP was losing P1.2 billion yearly as a result of unprofitable loans to the PDIC in the bailout of problematic banks.

"I'm urging an immediate investigation of the PDIC's management of funds and why BSP has too much financial exposure in PDIC," he said.

Cha-cha backers risk people's ire – solons

By TJ Burgonio

GOVERNMENT LEADERS BENT ON CONVENING Congress into a constituent assembly to amend the Constitution without the Senate were courting the "wrath of the people," Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan warned yesterday.

Pangilinan advised Charter change proponents to think "long and hard" before pushing ahead with the "disputable move" to amend the 1987 Constitution "employing patently illegal means."

The senator said the proponents of Cha-cha were "dead wrong" to think that Filipinos were "so dumb as to meekly swallow this latest arrogance and tasteless maneuver."

"They are courting the wrath of a people tired of decades of self-serving political maneuvers by *trapos* (traditional politicians). They are testing to the limits the people's patience on this one and the people's response may come as a shock to these arrogant power-wielders," he said.

Pangilinan was reacting to disclosures by incoming Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno that the pro-administration Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi) party had so far gathered 110 signatures of lawmakers to get Congress to convene itself into a constituent assembly.

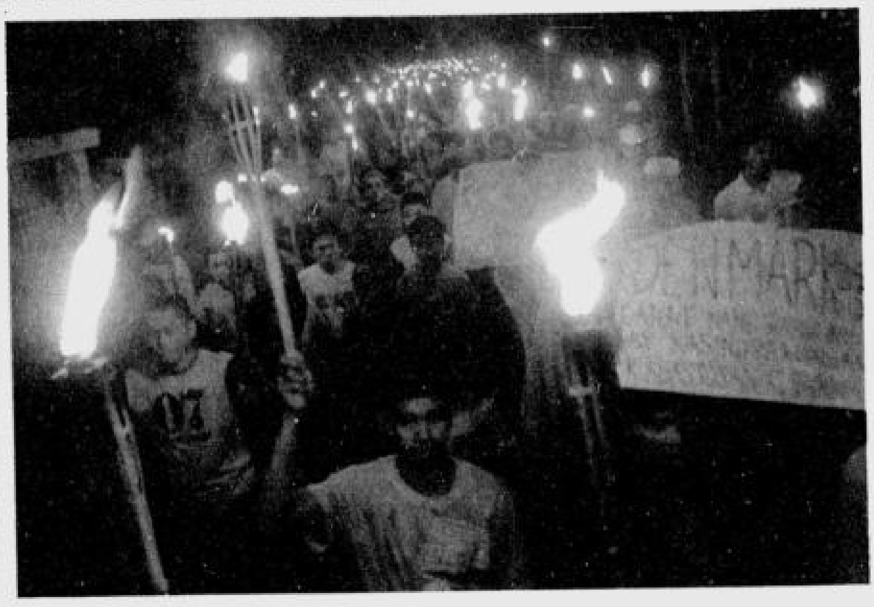
Speaker Jose de Venecia launched last week a campaign to gather 195 signatures of "all members of Congress," voting jointly, to constitute the Senate and the House into a constituent assembly to change the Charter.

He said the constitutional provision authorizing the revision of the Constitution by a three-fourths vote of all members of Congress was "very clear, there's no room for ambiguity."

The Senate said that only a majority of both chambers, voting separately, could convert Congress into a constituent assembly to amend the Charter.

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino "Nene" Pimentel Jr. said there was no need for senators to challenge the De Venecia-led initiative, once it was completed, before the Supreme Court.

"Let them gather 1 million signatures until they're blue, it will not amount to anything. Nothing plus nothing equals nothing," he said.



NOT FUNNY
Hundreds of Muslims held a torch rally on Saturday at Maharlika Village in Taguig City to protest the satirical cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad that were published by a Danish newspaper last year. Last week, Muslims held a protest on Ayala Avenue in front of the Danish Embassy in Makati over the cartoons that have earned the ire of followers of Islam worldwide.

RAFFY LERMA

Piracy worth ₱1.3B

THE COUNTRY'S ANTI-piracy agency said yesterday it would step up the drive against copyright violators as an industry study showed that reduced software piracy alone could raise up to P1.3 billion in taxes for the government and generate more than 2,000 new jobs.

Adrian S. Cristobal Jr., director general of the Intellectual Property Office, said the recent decision by the United States to remove the Philippines from its priority watch list was recognition of the government's efforts to protect intellectual property rights.

Still, the Office of the US Trade Representative said the Philippines needed to take stronger measures to stay off the list of countries considered notorious for bootlegging computer software, movies, music, books and apparel.

Cristobal said his office would undertake measures to ensure that gains made in protecting intellectual property rights would translate to economic and social benefits.

Ronnel W. Domingo

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IPL Photorejuvenation Treatment helps banish freckles, dark spots, and spider veins without a trace. According to Janet, "I believe my freckles became more prominent as I got older. So whenever I went out of the house, I would use face powder to cover them up. But now I don't use anything anymore because they're all gone! And now people would tell me that I have really nice, flawless skin."

IPL is a gentle, non-invasive treatment that uses a broad spectrum of light to treat the face, neck, chest, back, hands and virtually anywhere that sun damage or blemishes show. It uses the Intense Pulsed Light technology to correct a variety of skin conditions and skin imperfections: freckles, skin discoloration, signs of ageing, age spots, unsightly spider veins, broken capillaries, rosacea and other blemishes. Facial Care Centre's Dr. Maria Isabelita Joya says, "IPL's amazing results include: better skin tone, reduced blotchiness, pigmentations and broken blood vessels, smoother surface texture, and a more youthful-looking skin."

To restore an overall youthful look, IPL can simultaneously treat a wide variety of skin concerns safely and effectively. It erases skin damage with minor disruption on the skin's surface unlike other conventional treatments. As another satisfied client, Dr. Ariel Torres, would attest: "I'm an avid golfer so I'm very much exposed to the sun. That's how I had freckles. And I've tried every whitening product you can possibly think of: whitening cream, whitening lotion, sunblock, scrub, I even bought this thing from Hong Kong that you're supposed to drink to lighten your skin...nothing! It lightens up your skin for a while but you can't expose yourself to the sun anymore. And for avid players like me, that's totally unthinkable! So when I tried IPL, I was really impressed. Just after the first treatment, there were already visible, dramatic results! IPL is really the only treatment that worked for me."

Like Dr. Torres and Janet Ley, many satisfied clients have reported a reduction in age spots, freckles, and other skin discoloration. Most women who lead active and busy lifestyles are happy with the fact that aside from the visible improvement in their skin, they experience relatively no downtime. This means that one can actually have fairer, even-toned, glowing skin after approximately 30 minutes of treatment, and can go to work on the same day, as if nothing happened at all!

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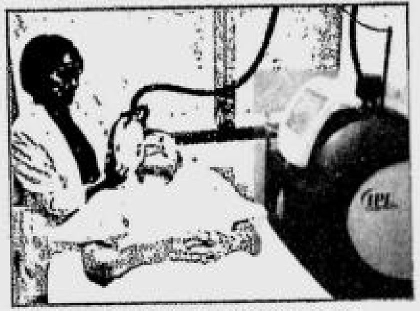
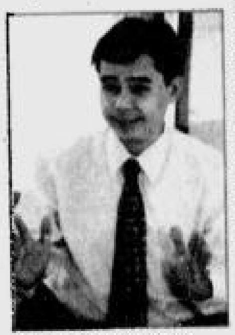
Janet Ley, enjoying her clear, flawless skin.



Dr. Joya performing the IPL Photorejuvenation Treatment on a client.



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Dr. Maria Isabelita Joya with the IPL machine.

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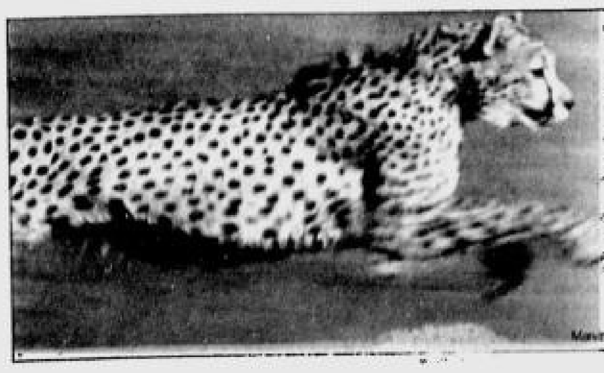

Edsa docu: Gringo et al. didn't think of People Power

By Fe Zamora

REBEL TROOPS HAD PLANNED TO ATTACK Malacañang sometime between Dec. 25 and 30, 1985, but the plan was postponed after Ferdinand Marcos announced the holding of snap elections.

The assault on Malacañang was reset for Feb. 23, 1986, about two weeks after the Feb. 7 snap polls. But Marcos got wind of the plan a day before the attack, sending the rebels scampering for safety.

Faced with possible arrest, they thought of going underground and pursuing a guerrilla war against Marcos. Another option was to barricade themselves in Camp Aguinaldo.

"It was basically a military plan. We didn't have an idea of people power," said former Sen. Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan in his account of the aborted coup plot that developed into the Edsa People Power Revolution from Feb. 22 to 25, 1986.

Honasan gave his account of the historic People Power Revolution in the 45-minute video documentary by the INQUIRER, "Edsa 20: Isang Larawan," to be shown at 8:30 tonight on ABC television.

Honasan said his role was to lead some 30 soldiers to assault the Palace "to control the situation ... to control Malacañang and its occupants and present the Marcoses to the people alive," he said.

Fair fight

At about the same time, he said, some 200 rebel soldiers to be led by then Lt. Col. Eduardo "Red" Kapunan and the late Lt. Col. Rodolfo Aguinaldo would enter the Palace grounds to support his 30-man commando team.

The rebels would have faced some 2,500 loyalist troops guarding the Palace. "It would have been a fair fight. After all, we were on the side of truth, we were doing the right thing," Honasan said.

The assault was set for 2 a.m. of Sunday, Feb. 23. But an impending crackdown on the suspected plotters forced a change of plans. Then Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile and then AFP vice chief of staff Lt. Gen. Fidel V. Ramos withdrew support from Marcos. They also appealed for public support.

One of those who responded to the call was Butz Aquino, brother of the late Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr. and leader of the Aug. 21 Movement (Atom), but with some reservations because Enrile and Ramos were longtime allies of Marcos, Aquino said.

Aquino said he even consulted former Justice Cecilia Muñoz-Palma.

HONASAN

"When she said, 'God be with you,' I took that to mean go ahead with your plans," he said. By midnight, he said, tens of thousands of Filipinos had massed at the portion of Edsa between Camp Aguinaldo and Camp Crame.

Among those in the crowd were nuns, seminarians and students. Ed Lingao of the University of the Philippines and St. Paul nuns Sister Ping Ocariza and Sister Teresita Burias were among the thousands who blocked the military tanks at Ortigas, and lived to tell their story.

Ocariza and Burias they were about to return to their convent when the crowd asked them to stay because there were tanks coming their way. Faced with the tanks, the two nuns led the crowd in praying the rosary.

"They said we should stay in front because we had no families," Ocariza said, laughing at how they ended up in front of the tanks.

She said she was overwhelmed by the huge piece of metal in front of her. "I looked at the wheels, and I imagined how they would feel against my body. I'd look like a flattened banana. I also prayed, if my vocation was to die before the tanks, let it be, Lord," she said.

Broadcaster June Keithley, who manned the underground Radyo Bandido, said she also felt impending death. The rebel station was actually located only about two kilometers from Malacañang. She said she was told that loyalist troops had been sent to kill her.

"I thought that there was a big chance that I would die," she said.

Keithley said she even received a telephone call from a woman who told her she would be killed. But she steeled herself for the worst.

The INQUIRER video documentary also includes interviews with former PDI journalist JP Fenix, who covered the Malacañang beat, composer/singer Jim Paredes, student volunteer Gabe Mercado, and retired Maj. Gen. William Hotchkiss.

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Another landslide, this time in Zambo, kills 5 illegal miners

By Michael Sarcauga
PDI Mindanao Bureau

HEAVY RAINS TRIGGERED ANother landslide, this time in Zamboanga del Sur, killing illegal miners.

Five people were killed and one was injured when a landslide hit a community in a gold-rush area in Bayog town on Saturday night.

Bayog Mayor Mary Ann Cartalla said three houses in the small-scale mining area in Sitio Balabag in Barangay Dipore were buried in mud at around 7:30 p.m.

The bodies of the victims were dug up at least 12 hours after the landslide.

Military, police and local officials had a hard time reaching the area, which is 17 kilometers from the town proper. A resident in Bayog said one must cross a river five times on the way to Sitio Balabag.

Cartalla said mining financier Eric Sumundong, who was one of those killed, had earlier warned the others to leave the area after noticing a crack in the ground they were digging.

Sumundong's warning came too late as the earth collapsed, burying him, sisters Marilyn and Julymae Bation, and two laborers named Dodong and Amang.

Merlyn Intag escaped with a minor injury, the mayor said.

Cartalla said the miners, who were operating without a permit, leveled the slope where they constructed houses and a gold milling facility.

"Sandbags were used to buttress the earth they carved when they leveled the slope, but it gave way when heavy rains softened the soil," the mayor said.

Town Councilor Celso Matias said illegal miners had been operating in the area since 1994.

In Davao Oriental, residents fled their homes in Sitio Ugbo in Barangay Tubaon in Tarragona town when a "rotational slide" (movement of a relatively intact slide mass) struck the village two weeks ago.

Carmelito Lupo, Office of Civil Defense (OCD) director for Southern Mindanao, said 168 families left their homes while 88 houses were damaged by the slide.

"There was a rotational slide in that area. All houses, whether made of concrete or wood, in its path were destroyed," Lupo told the INQUIRER.

As early as Feb. 4 residents detected the cracks, which "became bigger on Feb. 8 and 9," he said.

The cracks ranged from a foot to a meter wide.

Barangay Tubaon is at least 9 km away from the Tarragona town center.

Some of the evacuees have returned to their homes but have been staying with relatives living in nearby Sitio Ugbo at night, the OCD said.

Lupo said Tarragona Mayor Samuel Uy and other municipal and provincial officials met with the Bureau of Mines and Geosciences on Feb. 14 and recommended that residents be transferred to a safer place.

"The place (Barangay Tubaon) is not fit for residential purposes anymore," Lupo said.

Damage to infrastructure was placed at P6.2 million.

Two weeks of heavy rains

In Tandag, Surigao del Sur, the provincial disaster coordinating council (PDCC) warned residents living near the mountains to leave their homes if the heavy rains that hit this province for two weeks continued.

PDCC chief Florencio Pimentel Jr. said landslides could occur anytime in the mountainous areas.

"The mountain slopes are now heavy with water and the soil is soft as a result of the two-week downpour," Pimentel said.

In recent years, landslides hit the mountain slopes of many towns of Surigao del Sur. *With reports from Joselle Badilla and Bert Pacate, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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BOC works to fix image

THE BUREAU OF CUSTOMS WILL SOON FILE 32 cases against suspected smugglers in a bid to prove its commitment to battling illegal activities, Commissioner Napoleon Morales has said.

Morales disclosed the move in a recent meeting with the American Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Amcham) where he vowed to enhance the integrity of the bureau, according to a statement.

"We need your help as the BOC can only succeed with close coordination and cooperation with the private sector, especially the foreign businessmen, in the country," Morales told Amcham.

He said the BOC would be signing a memorandum of agreement with the Department of Justice and the Office of the Solicitor General to facilitate the prosecution of cases against suspected smugglers.

Reynaldo Umali, BOC legal service director, said in a separate statement the bureau would be increasing its pool of lawyers to handle the cases to be filed under the Run After The Smugglers (RATS) program initiated by the Department of Finance.

The BOC is also expected to come out soon with the results of its investigation into the illegal activities of its own personnel.

Morales ordered the probe and the updating of the list of suspected smugglers after being criticized in a Senate hearing for the proliferation of smuggling. The names of several suspected smugglers were revealed at the hearing and Morales vowed to have them investigated. *Leila B. Salaverria*

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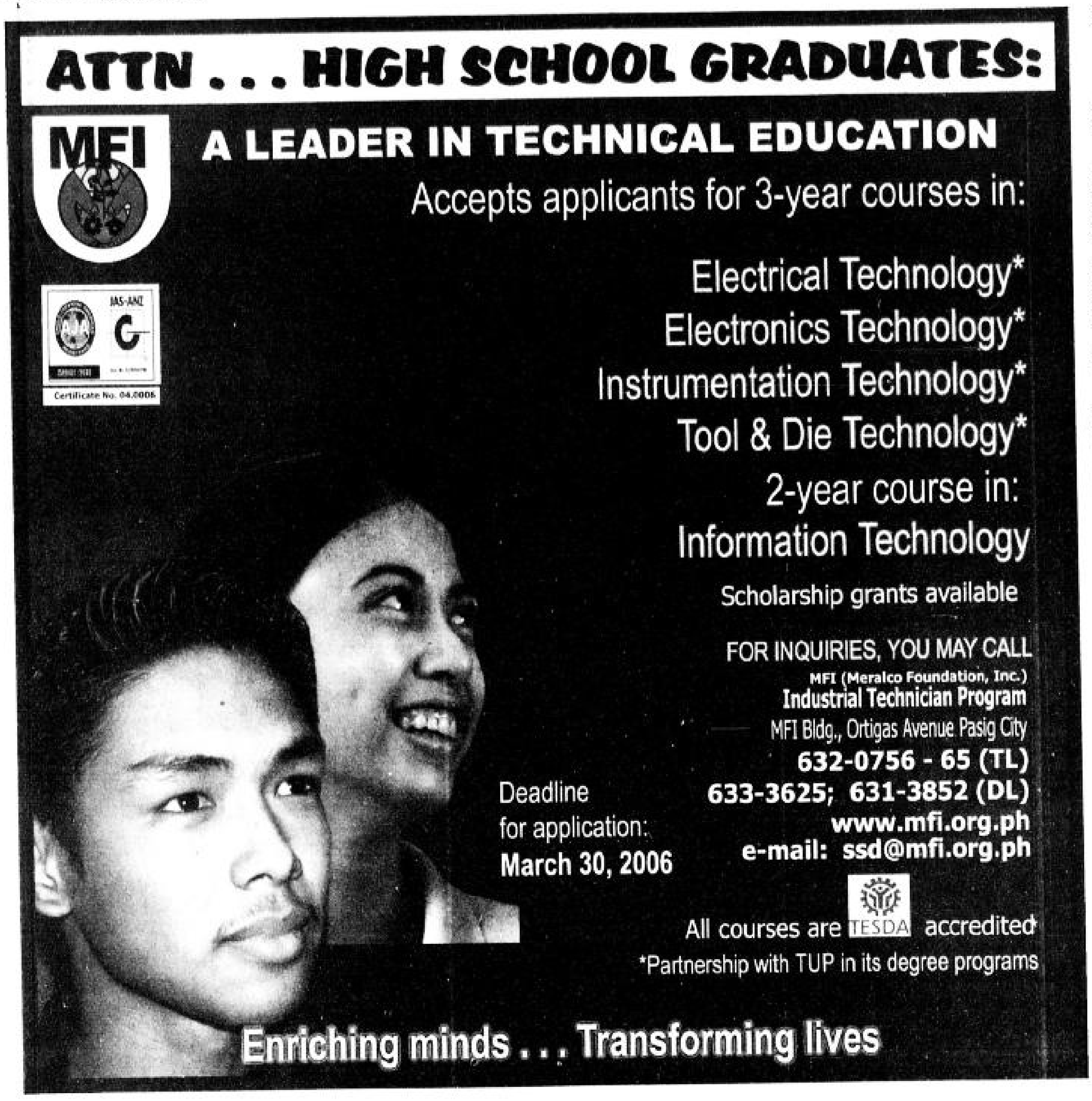
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'RP could lure 30% of call center seats'

IF FACTORIES OF THE PAST could be relocated, so can "the factories of the 21st century"—call centers.

The Trade Union Congress of the Philippines said the Philippines could corner as many as 450,000 call center jobs from the "offshoring" operations of large United States corporations over the next five years.

US firms are under enormous pressure to cut costs and boost shareholder returns and may eventually decide to offshore or outsource up to 1.5 million US-based call center seats that are now being staffed by Americans, said TUCP general secretary Ernesto Herrera.

"Our projection is that US firms will find ways to offshore to low-wage English-speaking countries about 50 percent, or 1.5 million, of all call center seats now based in the US," Herrera, a former senator, said.

He said that with the Westernized culture of college-educated Filipinos, "we should get 30 percent of the seats."

The US has at present more than three million call center seats, most of them in-house, supporting the operations of large companies that routinely deal with millions of customers.

About six million Americans staff the work stations, making sales calls, taking orders or fielding questions from customers. These workers range from telemarketers and catalog order takers to technical support agents for mobile telephone and computer users.

Herrera said US companies were paying their American workers from $7 to $14 per hour in wages, or six to 12 times the P15,000 per month that they would be paying Filipino call center agents.

"They can definitely save tons of money by resettling their call center activities in the Philippines, either through more cost-effective independent specialized contractors or by putting up in-house facilities here," he said.

A recent Columbia University survey indicated that after India, the Philippines has been the "second largest recipient of outsourcing, capturing almost 30 percent of the market." *Jerome Aning*

Kidney center beats odds, marks 23rd anniversary

THE NATIONAL KIDNEY AND Transplant Institute (NKTI) is celebrating its 23rd anniversary on Feb. 23 still true to its mission "to work hand in hand with government in the achievement of good health for the Filipino people by providing specialized medical services."

Founded in 1983 as the National Kidney Foundation of the Philippines, NKTI had just 50 beds for patients needing medical and surgical care. From there the foundation worked to become the forerunner of transplant centers in the country.

The NKTI story, however, is not without its twists and turns.

In 1998 fire gutted the nearby Lung Center of the Philippines affecting some operations of NKTI. At the same time, the kidney institute's buildings had deteriorated, equipment had broken down or become obsolete, pharmaceutical supplies had to be purchased from outside.

Like any public facility, NKTI depended greatly on meager government subsidies. But its staff persevered and its newly appointed executive director then, Dr. Enrique T. Ona, would not be deterred.

Ona began by rehabilitating the patients' rooms and building more to accommodate their growing number.

The Center for Special Services composed of the urology, endoscopy and chemotherapy, transfusion and pain management units, physical medicine and rehabilitation, prostate health clinic and vascular laboratory, wound and ostomy care clinic were established to cater to patients with special needs.

Up-to-date medical equipment were acquired like a spiral CT-scan, millennium VG gamma camera and open magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), ablatherm, extra corporeal shock wave lithotripsy, flow cytometry and fluoresence in situ hybridization (FISH) machines.

The NKTI provided continuing education for its doctors through extensive training programs in the various specialities. To continually upgrade the skills of its nurses and other paramedical staff, NKTI established the Institute of Advanced Nursing and Allied Health Professions.

Today, with its three-story edifice and two annexes that can accommodate 266 inpatients, its state-of-the-art equipment, services and expertise in providing quality medical care, NKTI has maintained its standing as the country's premier institution for kidney diseases and organ transplantation.

It is the first government hospital to be ISO 9001:2000 certified.

On Feb. 23, another building will be blessed, the Gourmet Express (New NKTI Café). Coinciding with this is the launch of the NKTI anniversary coffee table book "NKTI@20, A Dynamic Pulse."

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, February 20, 2006
7th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Jas 3:13-18
Gospel: Mark 9:14-29

When Jesus came to the place where they had left the disciples, they saw many people around and some teachers of the Law arguing with them. When the people saw Jesus, they were astonished and ran to greet him.

He asked, "What are you arguing about with them?" A man answered him from the crowd, "Master, I brought my son to you for he has a dumb spirit. Whenever the spirit seizes him, it throws him down and he foams at the mouth, grinds his teeth and becomes stiff all over. I asked your disciples to drive the spirit out, but they could not."

Jesus replied, "You faithless people. How long must I be with you? How long must I put up with you? Bring him to me." And they brought the boy to him.

As soon as the spirit saw Jesus, it shook and convulsed the boy who fell on the ground and began rolling about, foaming at the mouth. Then Jesus asked the father, "How long has this been happening to him?" He replied, "From childhood. And it has often thrown him into the fire and into the water to destroy him. If you can do anything, have pity on us and help us."

Jesus said to him, "Why do you say: 'If you can?' All things are possible for one who believes." Immediately the father of the boy cried out, "I do believe, but help the little faith I have."

Jesus saw that the crowd was increasing rapidly, so he ordered the evil spirit, "Dumb and deaf spirit, I command you: Leave the boy and never enter him again." The evil spirit shook and convulsed the boy and with a terrible shriek came out. The boy lay like a corpse and people said, "He is dead." But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him and the boy stood up.

After Jesus had gone indoors, his disciples asked him privately, "Why couldn't we drive out the spirit?" And he answered, "Only prayer can drive out this kind, nothing else."

Commentary

Wisdom is given to us from above—easy to recognize for it is peaceable, lenient, docile, rich in sympathy and just deeds, impartial and sincere. There is a harvest of justice sown in peace for those who cultivate peace. The disciples are having trouble without the wisdom of Jesus. They seek to heal and help and cannot make a dent in evil, illness, the trials of others. Jesus' presence commands the mute and deaf spirit of the child to leave, and it obeys. And Jesus chastises us, saying some things can only be driven out by prayer. Do we pray with Jesus before the Father in the power of the Spirit, in peace, rich in mercy, sincerely, doing justice? Prayer begins with words and ends in works.

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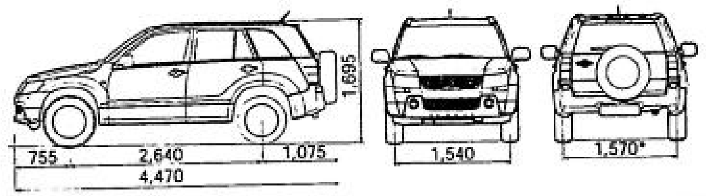

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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

16 killed in cartoons riot in Nigeria

KANO, NIGERIA—RIOTING IN NIGERIA LEFT AT least 16 people dead Saturday after Muslim protests against the publication of cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad descended into violence, a police spokesperson said.

Witnesses said that protesters turned on the Christian minority in the northern city of Maiduguri, burning shops and churches, after police dispersed a rally called to condemn European newspapers that printed the caricatures.

Nigeria's police spokeperson, Deputy Commissioner Haz Iwendi, said that Army troops and police reinforcements had been deployed to the city and that a curfew had been imposed to bring about a return to order.

"We've arrested 115 people. Some 15 persons were killed by rioters, and 11 churches burnt," he said.

Another rioter died in a similar protest in the city of Katsina which also turned ugly. The rioter was shot dead by police as marchers pelted officers with stones.

"Two police were injured, and we arrested 105 persons. Normality has been restored," Iwendi said.

Saturday's deaths were the first linked to the cartoons, as anger mounted among Nigeria's 60 million Muslims, roughly half the population.

Mohammed Auwal, a civil servant in Maiduguri, said: "When the protesters gathered for the protest at Ramat square they were ordered by a police detachment to disperse."

"The policemen then fired canisters of teargas to disperse the crowd.

"When news went into town about what happened at the square, a mob attacked motor spare parts shops of Christian Igbo traders at Monday market in the city, looting and burning them," Auwal said.

A local reporter, Abdullahi Bego, said that at least 20 shops had been looted and churches had been burned to the ground.

"There are a lot of antiriot police squad all over the city and their presence has helped quell the rampage," Bego said.

In recent weeks there have been protests around the world—some peaceful, some violent—by Muslims angry over the publication in European newspapers of cartoons satirising Islam's holiest figure, the Prophet Muhammad.

From Katsina, a witness said the crowd had only turned violent after a meeting about the cartoons turned to politics and fears that President Olusegun Obasanjo may change the constitution to allow him to stand for a third term.

Civil servant Ibrahim Salihu said: "Initially the preaching centered on the cartoons, but later the issue of the third term emerged.

"After the preaching the group decided to take its protest to government house. Their way was was blocked and police fired teargas. People started throwing stones, then the police fired into the crowd," he said.

A local reporter in Katsina said he had seen three people hospitalized with gunshot wounds following the fighting.

In Abuja, Information Minister Frank Nweke called on religious leaders to rein in their angry followers. *AFP*

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Bird flu for first time hits France, India, Iran

PARIS—THE H5N1 BIRD FLU VIRUS was identified Saturday for the first time in France, Iran and India, and claimed another victim in Indonesia, though Nigeria said it was bringing the disease under control.

The French government said all containment measures were already in place as it announced that tests on a wild duck found dead in the central-eastern Ain department confirmed the presence of the highly pathogenic strain of the virus.

Six member states of the European Union have now confirmed the presence of the potentially lethal strain of the virus to humans, which is spreading across the continent after showing up in Turkey and central Europe.

Fears about the first H5N1 outbreak in France, Europe's largest poultry producer, led the government to take preventive steps Friday and order all poultry and tame birds to be kept indoors, and all farm ducks and geese to be vaccinated in three departments on the Atlantic coast.

In India, state government officials said that a laboratory had confirmed the country's first outbreak of the virus in chickens after 50,000 birds died.

With concerns about the world's poultry stock, the World Health Organization (WHO) has said avian influenza is not transmitted through properly cooked poultry or poultry products, as the H5N1 virus is heat-sensitive.

Meanwhile, Iran said that 135 wild swans found dead at the Caspian Sea coast have tested positive for H5N1, the first cases of the virus to be confirmed in the Islamic republic.

Indonesia confirmed its 19th death from bird flu, a 23-year-old man who worked for a chicken vendor, as the health minister vowed to boost stockpiles of the Tamiflu anti-viral drug.

The world's fourth most populous nation has now reported eight fatalities from H5N1 this year alone, the highest figure globally. The virus has claimed some 90 lives, mostly in Asia, since late 2003.

The virus is spreading in Austria, affecting a swan in the capital Vienna and a duck in a neighboring village, officials said Saturday.

At the same time it has been detected in 28 more dead birds on a German island where 13 were found earlier this week, the northeastern state of Mecklenburg-Pomerania's agriculture minister, Till Backhaus, said.

German Agriculture Minister Horst Seehofer warned on Friday that about 80 birds in all had been tested for avian influenza and more positive results could be expected.

Officials in Nigeria said Saturday that its bird flu crisis was slowly coming under control, 11 days after Africa's first outbreak of the deadly H5N1 strain of avian influenza.

"The situation is under control ... if there are new challenges we are up to it," Nigeria's chief veterinary officer Junaido Maina told AFP.

"Under the emergency preparedness plan, we have 70 investigative and diagnostic teams to go out, get and test samples from all over the country as soon as there are a high number of deaths," he said.

Bird flu had been confirmed in three northern states but there have been several suspected outbreaks in other states.

Egyptian Prime Minister Ahmed Nazif on Saturday urged Egyptians to put an end to the use of rooftop farmyards, identified as a major health hazard since the first outbreak of avian influenza was confirmed. Four out of six birds found to have been infected by the deadly H5N1 strain in Cairo came from such installations.

Italy is prepared to breach European Union rules on state aid to agriculture in order to boost poultry farmers suffering from consumer fears over bird flu, Italian media quoted Agriculture Minister Gianni Alemanno as saying Saturday. *AFP*

HEN being vaccinated in India. AP

PAKISTANI Muslim activists shout anti-European slogans during a demonstration in Peshawar, Feb. 18, against publication of the cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad. AFP

Danish editor: Cartoons printed in response to self-censorship

WASHINGTON—THE DANISH EDITOR IN charge of publishing cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad says they were printed in response to self-censorship on issues regarding Islam and that giving in to pressure not to run them would have been "incompatible with a secular democracy."

In an opinion article written for Sunday editions of the Washington Post, Flemming Rose, the editor at the Jyllands-Posten newspaper behind the publication of the caricatures, said running the cartoons was responding to "widening fears and feelings of intimidation in dealing with issues related to Islam."

Citing a Danish children's writer not being able to find an illustrator for a book about Muhammad and the Tate gallery in London withdrawing an installation that depicted a Koran, Bible and Talmud torn to pieces, Rose said his newspaper saw "a legitimate news story to cover, and Jyllands-Posten decided to do it by adopting the well-known journalistic principle: Show, don't tell."

The cartoons, first printed in September, have set off violent protests around the world in which at least 45 people have died. Other Western newspapers, mostly in Europe, have reprinted the pictures, asserting their news value and the right to freedom of expression.

Islam widely holds that representations of Muhammad are banned for fear they could lead to idolatry.

Rose—who is on indefinite holiday from his newspaper—wrote that the cartoons were fair in their treatment of Islam.

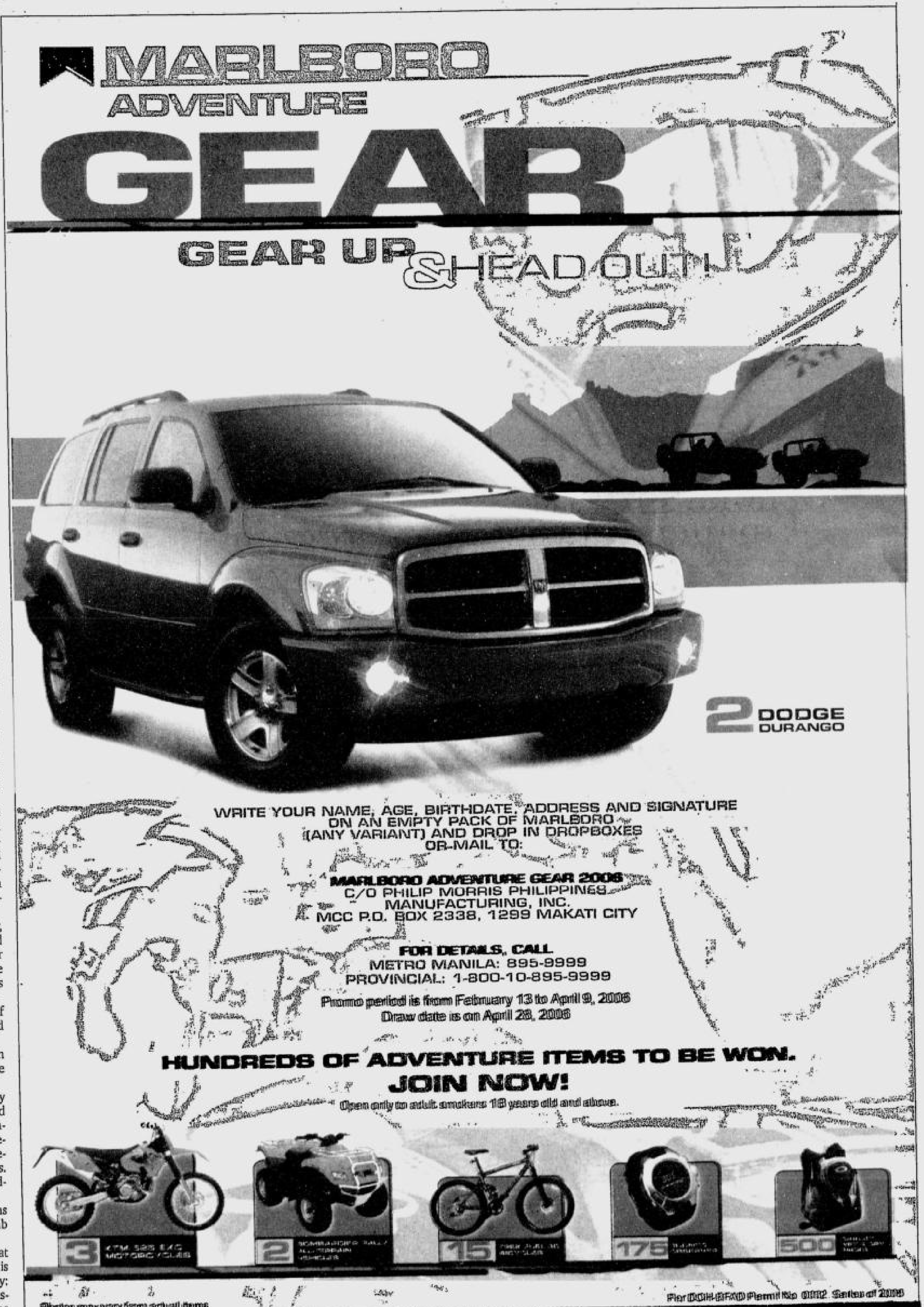
"The cartoonists treated Islam the same way they treat Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism and other religions. And by treating Muslims in Denmark as equals they made a point: We are integrating you into the Danish tradition of satire because you are part of our society, not strangers. The cartoons are including, rather than excluding, Muslims," Rose wrote.

One of the more notorious of the cartoons published features the prophet with a bomb in his turban.

"Angry voices claim the cartoon is saying that the prophet is a terrorist or that every Muslim is a terrorist," Rose wrote. "I read it differently: Some individuals have taken the religion of Islam hostage by committing terrorist acts in the name of the prophet. They are the ones who have given the religion a bad name."

After reports that the Danish newspaper refused to run caricatures of Jesus in the past, critics said that pointed to a double standard when it comes to dealing with Islam. But Rose defended his newspaper's editorial decisions, saying depictions of Jesus have been printed.

"Jyllands-Posten has refused to print satirical cartoons of Jesus, but not because it applies a double standard. In fact, the same cartoonist who drew the image of Muhammad with a bomb in his turban drew a cartoon with Jesus on the cross having dollar notes in his eyes and another with the star of David attached to a bomb fuse. There were, however, no embassy burnings or death threats when we published those." *AP*



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Buyer draws $365-M lottery jackpot ticket

OMAHA, NEBRASKA—AT LEAST ONE person bought a winning ticket for Saturday's record $365 million Powerball lottery jackpot, officials said.

A winning ticket was sold Lincoln, Nebraska, the Nebraska Lottery reported. It was not known late Saturday whether other winning tickets were sold in other states.

The chances of winning the jackpot by matching all six numbers were 1 in 146.1 million. The winning numbers drawn Saturday night were 15-17-43-44-48 and Powerball 29.

People with dreams of winning a record $365 million Powerball lottery jackpot stood in lengthening lines to buy tickets that flew out of machines at dizzying speeds.

"I figure somebody is going to win it, so it might as well be me," said Casey Symonds after buying $25 worth of tickets for himself and four co-workers Friday in Nebraska.

The Powerball jackpot topped the previous lottery record, which was $363 million for the Big Game—the forerunner of Mega Millions. That was won by two ticket holders in Illinois and Michigan in 2000.

Powerball's previous record of $340 million was won by an Oregon family in October. AP

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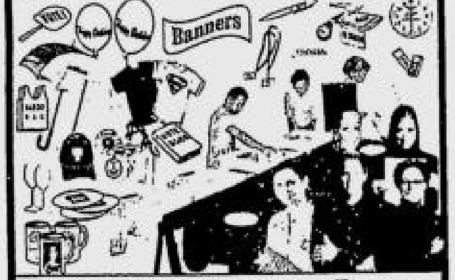

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1M fans 'satisfied' with Stones concert

RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil—Veteran rock group the Rolling Stones treated 1 million delirious fans to a rock 'n' roll spectacle with a free show on Rio de Janeiro's Copacabana Beach on Saturday night in what was one of the biggest rock concerts ever.

Singer Mick Jagger, 62, danced around the stage like a skinny teenager for the two-hour show, which featured songs from their early days in London 40 years ago and from their latest Grammy-winning album "A Bigger Bang."

Police deployed more than 6,000 officers throughout Rio, one of the most beautiful but violent cities in the world.

Officials had been worried about widespread thefts or trouble with the drug gangs that rule the shantytowns, or *favelas*.

"Nothing serious happened, thanks to God. It was calm," police Col. Leonardo Tavares said.

A fire department official said about 250 people were treated for exhaustion, drunkenness and other problems.

Paramilitary troops had occupied several *favelas* after rival drug gangs killed six people in the Rocinha shantytown on Wednesday.

Tavares estimated the crowd numbered about one million people. Thousands more milled around surrounding streets, drinking beer and holding impromptu parties.

Others watched from a flotilla of private boats in the bay and from hotel rooms along Atlantic Avenue, the main thoroughfare along the beach.

With its reputation for decadence, drugs and debauchery, Rio was the perfect venue for the Stones, former bad boys of rock who transformed into a powerful business operation.

The Rio concert was part of the band's "A Bigger Bang" tour, which kicked off in the United States in August and was the top-grossing rock tour of 2005.

Fans came from as far away as Japan and Europe for the show. *Reuters*

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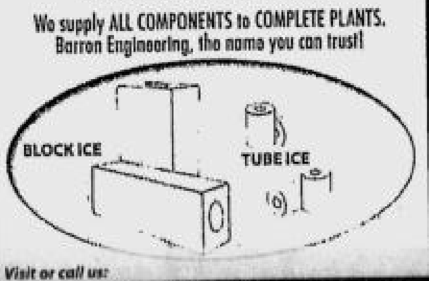

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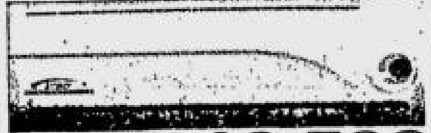

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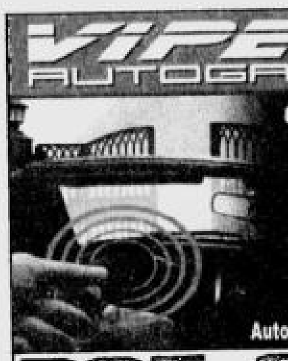

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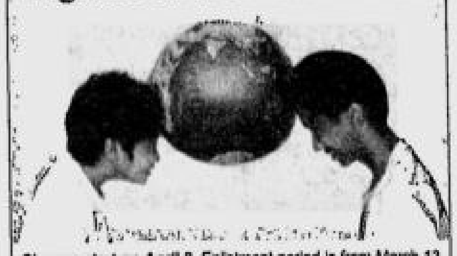

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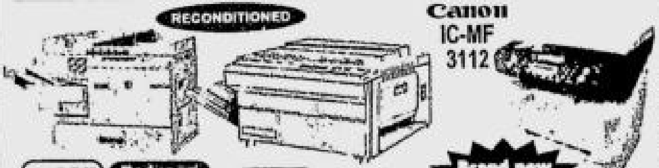

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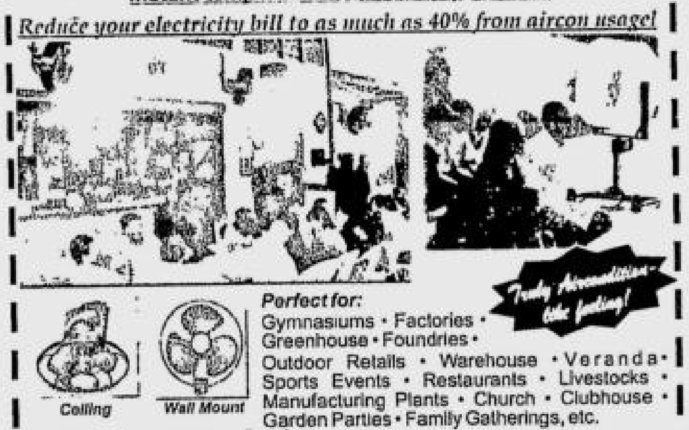

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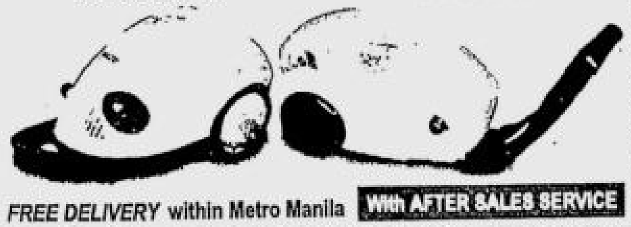

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Scientists: California quake may trigger another Katrina

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI—MANY DENSELY populated US regions face the threat of flooding as disastrous as after Hurricane Katrina, due to urban spread into river floodplains, scientists warned Saturday.

An earthquake or even a moderate flood could destroy the levee system protecting towns and cities along the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers in northern California, said Jeffrey Mount of the University of California.

"The probability of a catastrophic levee failure in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta in the next 50 years is two in three," Mount said on the sidelines of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) annual conference.

Mount gave a worrying presentation to the conference entitled "The Sacramento/San Joaquin Delta: The next New Orleans?"

He said one of the frequent earthquakes in California could destroy the levee system that has been built up since the middle of the 19th century, sending flood water over a wide area.

Mount said it could have a similar impact to the Asian tsunami in 2004.

The Sacramento-San Joaquin delta takes more than 40 percent of California's rainfall and covers some 280,000 hectares. It is the main source of water for about 23 million people, of California's 34 million population.

But most of the land is below sea level and is protected by more than 1,600 km of levees.

Another 5,600 ha zone around St. Louis in Missouri faces a similar threat from the Mississippi river, according to Adolphus Busch, head of the Great Rivers Habitat Alliances.

Busch, a member of the Anheuser-Busch brewing family, said there had been excessive urbanization in the zone despite major floods in 1993.

He said the housing and development had drastically reduced alluvial grounds that normally sponge up flood waters.

Nicholas Pinter of the University of Southern Illinois said that efforts to protect St Louis against flooding ultimately had increased the risks.

Eighty-five percent of the Mississippi is now held back by levees and the level of the river has risen by 4 m since the start of the century, he said.

The situation is now similar to New Orleans, which was devastated last year after Hurricane Katrina smashed its water defenses, and in the Sacramento region.

"In spite of 70 years of federal flood control efforts and nearly 40 years of federal flood insurance, the costs of flooding continue to rise and there is no federal policy to provide direction for future actions," said Gerald Galloway, an engineering professor at the University of Maryland.

Galloway said that development had to be restricted in risk zones and water defenses had to be strengthened as the authorities in the Netherlands have done since disastrous flooding there.

AFP

Thaksin battles 'lame duck' label

By Nopporn Wong-Anan

BANGKOK—DURING HIS FIRST FIVE YEARS as Thai prime minister, Thaksin Shinawatra and his pro-business, modernizing government enjoyed a smooth ride through everything from bird flu to the tsunami to resurgent Muslim separatism.

But as the telecoms tycoon and self-styled "CEO premier" embarks on a sixth year in office, a chorus of critics from graft-busters to ex-business partners and antiprivatization campaigners are making his life increasingly difficult.

Fighting rearguard actions on so many public relations fronts, Thaksin and his Thai Rak Thai (Thais Love Thais) party will have little time in the coming months and years to get on with the business of government, analysts say.

Few independent analysts believe he will not complete the remaining three years of his second term, but they see Friday's session with 100 academics on constitutional reform as typical of the appeasement tactics he will need to deploy.

"The government has become a lame duck as Thaksin has lost his integrity of leadership," said political and investment analyst Somjai Phagapasvivat of Bangkok's Thammasat University.

"He will be busy keeping the lid on big holes, closing down on all constitutional channels to dismiss him," Somjai said.

"He won't have much time left for the economy."

One major headache is a vocal backlash from the Bangkok middle-classes over his family's $1.9 billion, tax-free sell-off of their stake in Shin Corp, the telecoms empire he founded, to Singapore state investment company Temasek.

He won a let-off on Thursday when the Constitutional Court refused to launch a probe into the controversial share sale.

But he is far from out of the woods.

Two weeks ago, vengeful former business partner and media tycoon Sondhi Limthongkul amassed a crowd of 40,000 people—the biggest antigovernment demonstration in 14 years—calling for Thaksin to stand down.

A repeat protest a week later drew 20,000 to central Bangkok, and Sondhi has vowed to keep going until Thaksin is out of Government House. Some analysts are saying this week's Constitutional Court decision could boost the numbers again.

The unusually strident political tone caused the stock market and the baht to wobble last week.

It has also thrown a major question mark over Thaksin's ability to push through an ambitious $43 billion scheme to overhaul public infrastructure.

Transport Minister Pongsak Raktapongpisal admitted this week that long-term foreign investors were asking about the sustainability of the planned "megaprojects," which range from rail and subway networks to rural irrigation systems.

Reuters

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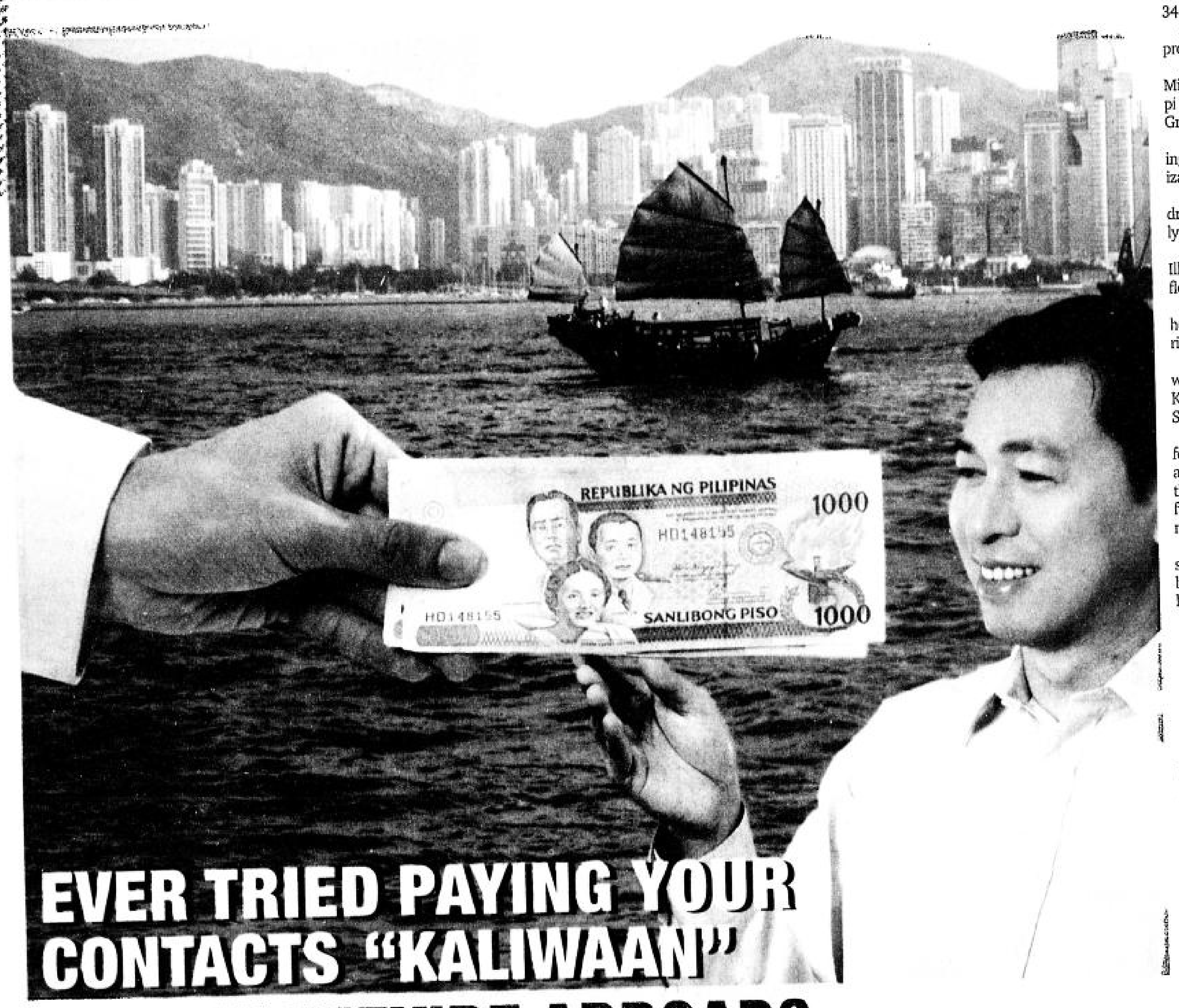

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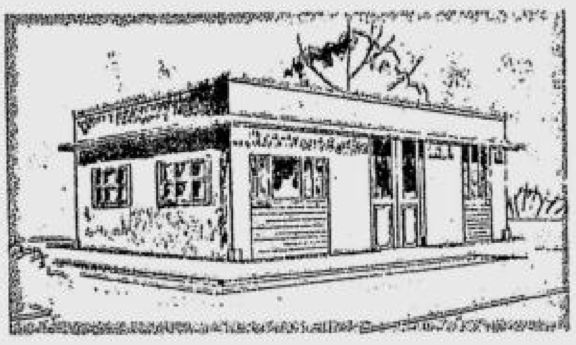

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THE PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER, INC. has its business and editorial offices at
•Chino Roces Ave corner Yague and Mascardo Sts., Makati City
•P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office 1263 Makati City
•Our telephone numbers are 897-8808 connecting all departments
•Editorial Fax 897-4793 / 897-4794 •Advertising 897-4807
•Circulation 527-3342 / 527-3348 / 528-0183 / 528-0186 and 528-0213 / Fax: 528-02-34.
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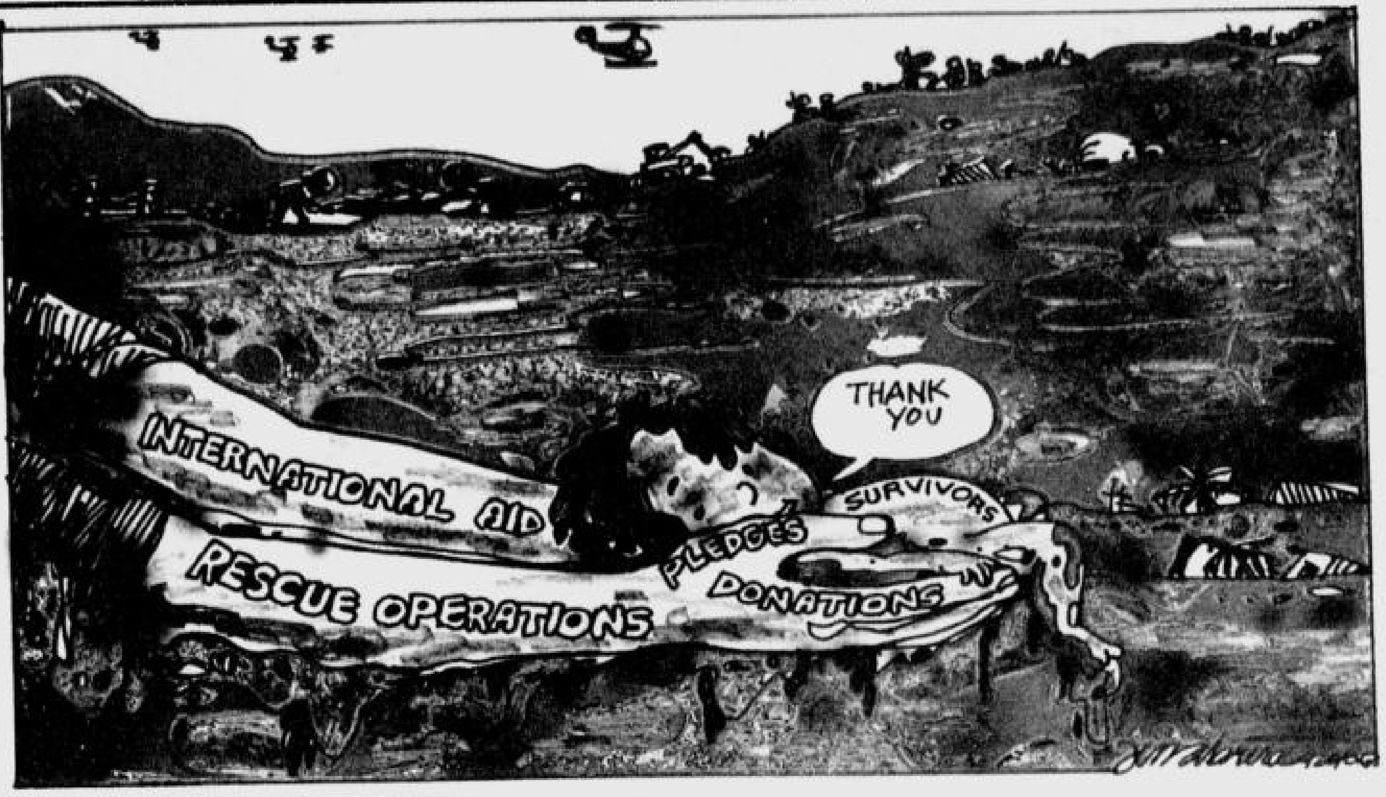

EDITORIALS

Suddenly, a landslide

THE NUMBERS VARY, BUT WHATEVER THE ESTImate, the import is not in doubt. An entire barangay was wiped off the map last Friday, in late morning, when a landslide buried Guinsaugon, one of 30 barangays in St. Bernard town, Southern Leyte.

Perhaps 1,300 residents lie under some 30 feet of mud; perhaps the number is closer to 1,800. It is hard to be either exact or certain. The weather conditions that led to the landslide have made rescue and relief operations extremely difficult, even risky.

The last survivor rescued was pulled out from under the muck on Friday afternoon. Since then, only dead bodies have been recovered. (As of 4 p.m. yesterday, that grim statistic stood at 62.) The number of those not yet accounted for remains unbearably high.

As many as 300 of the missing are elementary students, believed trapped in their school when the rain-saturated slope of the mountain came crashing down. One of the six teachers buried with them sent text messages hours after the landslide, confirming they were still alive. But since 7 p.m. last Friday her cell phone has fallen silent.

It is unseemly, even illogical, to compare tragedies. But it is also only natural. Out of instinct, we reach back into the past to help make sense of the present.

In many ways, the Guinsaugon tragedy is "worse" than the shocking PhilSports stampede. There is the sheer difference of scale: possibly almost 2,000 victims died. There is the absolute unexpectedness of it all; the victims had not joined a queue for the chance to win big or small prizes. Many of them were simply going about their ordinary business; a number of them had in fact gone back to the village because, after two weeks of rain, the weather looked like it had finally cleared. Then the devastation—the mountain shook, and an entire barangay disappeared.

Not least, there is the anguish of the innocent: Hundreds of children did what society expected of them, going to school because, as many of them must have been told, education was the ticket to a better life—only to learn the most fateful lesson of all: Death comes like a thief in the night.

Ours is still a religious nation, so it is only to be expected that in the last few days both public discourse and private conversation have touched on the threshold question: How can God, or Allah, or Providence, allow something like this to happen?

There are no easy answers; there may in fact be no answer. But the Christian faith that a majority of Filipinos still profess to follow offers a radical response: Those who believe in a suffering God believe that their God is right there among the suffering.

Lessons from the past

IT SEEMS WE HAVE LEARNED SOME LESSONS from the natural disasters of the past. The organized reaction to the Guinsaugon landslide has been disciplined, proportionate, and on target.

Both the district congressman and the provincial governor responded to the first news of the tragedy with resolve and dispatch. In the first hours after the landslide, they proved to be the principal and largely accurate (if somewhat harassed) sources of information.

The national government also responded in a timely manner. A few hours after the landslide, the President went on the air, to offer her sympathies and to announce her instructions. These included the redeployment of Army soldiers to help in the rescue, and the hiring of a ship to transport NFA rice and other necessities.

The Philippine National Red Cross spearheaded both rescue operations in the village and a fund-raising campaign in the Geneva headquarters of the Red Cross; it managed to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars in aid in a matter of hours. Through the National Disaster Coordinating Council, the US Embassy also announced the redeployment to Leyte of two Navy ships that were en route to the Balikatan military exercises in Sulu.

Much remains to be done, of course. As many as 1,800 residents may still lie under 30 feet of mud. Some 1,500 survivors need immediate assistance and long-term rehabilitation. But all told, what needed to be done in the first 48 hours of the tragedy was done; even politicians and political players like outspoken bishops observed a moratorium on political buck-passing and blame-throwing. All that will come later, inevitably, like fate.

Cha-cha brains giving out fake awards

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

IF YOU ARE INCLINED TO FAVOR THE ADOPTION of a new constitution and new form of government, the following story should give you pause because it gives you an insight into the character of the mastermind behind the Charter change. It also gives an indication of what he is capable of doing once he becomes the head of Parliament.

Speaker Jose de Venecia, the principal driving force behind the Cha-cha, has been giving out fake "congressional awards" to visiting heads of state and high officials from other countries, former Sen. Francisco Tatad told a breakfast forum last Saturday. Moreover, he may have sown the seeds of a diplomatic row with China by recognizing Taiwan as an independent nation, thus violating our own "One-China" policy. Recently, he founded the Philippine-Taiwan Parliamentarians' Friendship Society, with all the members of the House of Representatives as founding members. Not only that, he conferred a fake decoration on President Hu Jintao of China when he visited here. Expect a diplomatic protest from the Chinese Embassy.

In just two years, De Venecia has also conferred the decoration on President Musharraf of Pakistan, President Kalam of India, Speaker Oleksy of the Polish Parliament, Secretary General Anders Johnson of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, IPU President Sergio Paez of Chile, and former Prime Minister Aznar of Spain. The award has provoked serious questions, especially among diplomatic observers. De Venecia calls it the "Congressional Medal of Achievement." But there is no record of this award having been created by Congress. The citation carries only De Venecia's signature, without that of Senate President Franklin Drilon, who heads the other half of Congress.

The citation says: "This Award is bestowed on behalf of the Filipino nation and in accordance with Resolution No. 453 of the House of Representatives, Congress of the Philippines."

But a check on the records of the House showed that Resolution 453 has nothing to do at all with the award, Tatad said.

"HR 453," he said, "is entitled 'Resolution Directing the Committees on Labor and Employment and Foreign Affairs to conduct a joint congressional inquiry on the status of the implementation of the government's ban on deployment of overseas Filipino workers to Iraq and look into the alleged neglect of duty of officials of the Department of Labor and Employment and Foreign Affairs tasked to implement the said ban.' It was introduced by party-list members Crispin Beltran, Rafael Mariano, Teodoro Casiño, Liza Largoza-Maza, Satur Ocampo and Joel Virador."

Neither the Senate nor the House of Representatives has any part in the creation of the award. "It appears to be purely De Venecia's personal invention and initiative, but this is not made known, whether to the public or to its recipients," Tatad said.

* * *

The marathon air talks between the Philippines and Bahrain—still going on in Makati as of this writing, more than 60 hours after they began last Feb. 16 in Clark Field, Pampanga—could end up with one of the most contentious, disagreeable and anomalous bilateral air negotiations the country has entered into.

Like any good host, the Philippines laid out the welcome mat for the delegation from Bahrain, a tiny speck of desert land in the Arabian Gulf, not much bigger than Metro Manila.

The talks were a debacle for the Philippines. The Philippine air panel—headed by Transportation Undersecretary Edward Harun Pagunsan and composed of representatives from the departments of foreign affairs, trade and industry, and tourism, as well as from Clark Development Corp. and the local airlines—was hamstrung by poor leadership and meddling from interlopers with vested interests.

Here are some interesting sidelights of the talks shared by somebody who was there:

On the eve of the negotiations, a dinner was hosted by Amable Aguiluz V, chair of the AMA Computer School, for all delegates. Aguiluz, who goes by the honorary title of "ambassador," is actually a businessman who established a computer school in Bahrain in 2002.

That made him a party of interest in the talks and, indeed, Aguiluz showed his true colors when he openly took the position of the Gulf state in his public remarks during the dinner. Our source said Aguiluz closely monitored the talks and lobbied Malacañang on behalf of Bahrain. For a "Philippine ambassador," such a behavior is appalling, even treasonous.

On the other hand, Pagunsan is said to have been less than resolute in supporting the position taken by the rest of the RP panel—that the airlines of both countries forge a commercial agreement as a condition for granting Gulf Air more flight rights to Manila.

Pagunsan was not a firm leader, our source said. Concerned about what the Arabs might do if they were rebuffed, he endorsed the Bahraini demand for more air rights (an additional of six flights weekly) to his panel members. In other words, Pagunsan was more worried about Bahrain's reaction than what was best for the Philippines.

This, despite knowing that the RP-Bahrain air market is modest—this tiny island sent less than 1,800 tourists here last year and there are only 30,000 Filipino workers there.

When the rest of the panel stuck to its position, Pagunsan came around, but not decisively enough. He wavered and left the RP position hanging, instead of presenting a united front to the Arabs.

Fortunately, the rest of the panel stood firm to uphold the national interest amid tremendous pressure from the powers-that-be.

Whatever the outcome of these talks, our hearts go out to the RP panel members for their principled stand.

Songs for our times

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I THOUGHT I'D SHARE SOME SONGS WITH you on the first day of Edsa week. You might want to sing or hum them at the Shrine or outside of it.

The first one is called, "The Great Pretender," sung by the Plotters and dedicated to You-Know-Who (This one required little revising!):

Oh-oh, yes I'm the great pretender/ Pretending that I'm doing well/ My need is such I pretend too much/ I'm lonely but no one can tell./ Oh-oh, yes I'm the great pretender/ Adrift in a world of my own/ I've played the game but to my real shame/ I'm left to grieve all alone.

Too real is this feeling of make-believe/ Too real when I feel what my heart can't conceal./ Yes I'm the great pretender/ Just laughin' and gay like a clown/ I seem to be what I'm not, you see/ I wear on my head someone's crown/ Pretending I'll still be around. Too real is this feeling of make-believe/ Too real when I feel what my heart can't conceal. Oh, yes, I'm the great pretender. (repeat refrain)

Next song is called "Yesterday," sung by the Beat-less, still dedicated to You-Know-Who:

Yesterday,/ All my troubles seemed so far away/ Now it looks as though they're here to stay/ Oh, I believe in yesterday./ Suddenly,/ I'm not half the Prez I used to be/ There's a shadow hanging over me/ Oh, yesterday came suddenly.

Why I have to go I don't know/ I couldn't say/ I did something wrong now I long for yesterday.

Yesterday/ pow'r was such an easy game to play/ Now I need a place to hide away/ Oh, I believe in yesterday./ Why I have to go I don't know/ I couldn't say/ I did something wrong/ All I'm now is yesterday.

Next song is called "Dancing King," sung by Aba Naman, dedicated alternatively to Fidel V or Joe De V and the Cha-cha boys:

You can dance, you can jive, having the time of your life/ See that guy, watch his scene, dig in the Dancing King./ Life is black and the mood is low/ People have nowhere to go/ Just come into my parlor, get into the swing/ You've just found the Cha-cha King/ You can never stop this guy/ He is old but his ambition's high/ With a bit of grease money everything is fine/ You're in the mood for a dance/ And then he grabs his chance.

You are the Dancing King, still in heat, only seventy/ Dancing King, feel the need for the ecstasy.

You're a teaser you turn 'em on/ Leave 'em burning and then you're gone/ Looking for a leader? No one else will do/ You're in the mood for a dance/ And then he grabs his chance./ You are the Dancing King, still in heat, only seventy/ Dancing King still looking for your lost destiny.

Next song is "No Woman, No Cry," sung by the Wailers, dedicated to the detainees, soldier and civilian:

No Woman, no cry (repeat 4 times)/*I remember as we go to sit/ In this prison yard in Ghost Town/ Oba, observing the hypocrites/ As they would mingle with the good people they meet/ Good friends we have had, oh good friends we've lost along the way/ To find your future you can't forget your past/ So dry your tears I say*

No Woman, no cry/ No Woman, no cry/ Little darlin' don't shed no tears/

No Woman, no cry

Said, said, said I remember as we go to sit/ In the government yard in Ghost Town/ And then Magdi would make the fire light/ Log wood burnin' through the night/ Then we would cook plots and porridge/ Of which we'll share with you/ My faith is my only carriage/ So I've got to push on through/ But when we're free...

Ev'rything's gonna be alright (repeat till *sawa*)

Next song is "Bad Moon Rising" sung by the Need for Credence Revival, dedicated to the *trapos* (this one required no revision at all!):

"I see a bad moon arising/ I see troubles on the way/ I see earthquakes and lightnin'/ I see bad times today./ Don't go around tonight/ Well, it's bound to take your life/ There's a bad moon on the rise.

I hear hurricanes a-blowing/ I know the end is coming soon/ I fear rivers overflowing/ I hear the voice of rage and ruin./ Don't go around tonight (repeat refrain)

Hope you have got your things together/ Hope you are quite prepared to die/ Looks like we're in for nasty weather/ One eye is taken for an eye./ Don't go around tonight/ Well, it's bound to take your life/ There's a bad moon on the rise. (repeat till warning is heeded)

Next song is E.D.S.A., sung by the Village People Power, dedicated to the youth:

Young man there's no need to feel down/ I said young man pick yourself off the ground / I said young man 'cause your world's going down/ There's no need to be unhappy./ Young man there's a place you can go/ I said young man when salvation's so slow/ You can go there and I'm sure you will find/ Many ways to force the right time.

It's great to go to the E.D.S.A./ It's great to go to the E.D.S.A./ They have everything for young men to employ/ You can hang out with all the boys./ It's great to go to the E.D.S.A./ It's great to go to the E.D.S.A./ You can get yourself clean/ You can do what you feel/ You can win in the last reel.

Young man, Are you listening to me/ I said, young man, what do you want to be/ I said, young man, you can make real your dreams,/ but you've got to know this one thing./ No man, does it all by himself/ I said, young man, put despair on the shelf/ And just go there, to the E.D.S.A./ I'm sure you can help them today. (repeat refrain)

Young Man, I was once in your shoes,/ I said, I was down and out with the blues/ I felt, no man cared if I were alive/ I felt the whole world was so jive/ That's when someone came up to me/ and said young man take a walk up the street/ There's a place there called the E.D S A./ They can start you back on your way. (repeat refrain)

Last song sung by, of, and for everyone.

Ang bayan kong Pilipinas/ Lupain ng ginto't bulaklak/ Pag-ibig ang sa kanyang palad/ Nag-alay ng ganda't dilag/ At sa kanyang yumi at ganda

Gahaman ay nahalina/ Bayan ko, binihag ka/Nasadlak sa dusa./ Ibon mang may layang lumipad/ Kulungin mo at umiiyak/ Bayan pa kayang sakdal dilag/ Ang 'di magnasang makaalpas/ Pilipinas kong minumutya/ Pugad ng luha at dalita/ Aking adhika makita kang sakdal laya.

Remembering Edsa I

SOUNDING BOARD

Fr. Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J.

AFTER EDSA I AND EDSA II, AND AS ONCE again we approach Feb. 21, thoughts of "people power" are very much alive. People power dethroned a president and gave birth to a new Constitution. Today, once again, there are movements toward the defenestration of a president and the adoption of a new Constitution.

Historical context is important. Revolutions do not happen and constitutions are not written in a vacuum. They are born under the auspices of prevailing political convictions.

The 1987 Constitution was born in the aftermath of the 1986 peaceful revolution which not only ousted President Ferdinand Marcos but also totally redesigned the governmental and constitutional system. Speaking of this event, the Court said in 1992: "From the natural law point of view, the right of revolution has been defined as 'an inherent right of a people to cast out their rulers, change their policy or effect radical reforms in their system of government or institutions by force or a general uprising when the legal and constitutional methods of making such change have proved inadequate or are so obstructed as to be unavailable.' It has been said that 'the locus of positive law-making power lies with the people of the state' and from there is derived 'the right of the people to abolish, to reform and to alter any existing form of government without regard to the existing constitution.'"

The 1987 Constitution was preceded by the Freedom Constitution which also affirmed that "the new government under President Corazon C. Aquino was installed through a direct exercise of the power of the Filipino people assisted by units of the New Armed Forces of the Philippines." But it was also this Freedom Constitution which called the 1986 Constitutional Commission into existence.

Can Edsa I happen again? What was its context?

There is a tendency to attribute the rebirth of democracy to the events of the four days in February 1986. Those days will forever be remembered as a shining moment in a people's history; but the four days do not tell all. Edsa was but a part of a process, albeit the most memorable both for the intensity of its emotion and its dramatically eye-catching and infectious symbolism. But the long process of which it was a part includes both the struggles that precipitated the imposition of martial law and the struggles during the long, dark nights that followed it.

There was never a moment, starting on Sept. 21, 1972, that the nation was not moving toward Edsa. The underground struggle, the bloody encounters, the groans of torture victims, the pamphleteering, the rallies, both political and religious, the silent storming of heaven by contemplative nuns, the whir of fax machines, the electoral struggle under the most adverse circumstances, and, yes, even the "collaboration" with the enemy—each in its own way contributed to the assurance of rebirth. In the end, Divine Providence, which the Filipino people had first formally invoked in its 1935 Constitution, put the pieces together and let them explode into the celebration that was Edsa.

When I reflect on the events of 20 years ago, I see hubris as Divine Providence's trigger in bringing about the final downfall of the ruler. Feeling that he bestrode the world like an unconquerable colossus, President Marcos dared all challengers to a "snap election." That was November 1985. The events that followed brought out a multiplicity of heroes no one of whom could have achieved the result alone.

First, presidential hopefuls sacrificed their ambition (realistic or not) in favor of one presidential candidate supported by all. They anointed a housewife inexperienced in governance, derisively branded by the "wise" as "*walang alam,*" who would become the "foolish" instrument through whom Providence would confound the proud. Her battle cry of "*tama na, sobra na*" captured the public imagination.

Then, in the early weeks of February 1986, whether by free choice or by desperate necessity, new heroes emerged. The computer operators unmasked the conspiracy to cheat the "foolish" woman of her electoral victory. Government intelligence officers discovered a RAM (Reform the Armed Forces Movement) plot for a coup d'etat. Trapped, the soldiers made a defiant stand. To the death, they said.

Then followed the call of Jaime Cardinal Sin and Butch Aquino for the populace to rescue the beleaguered soldiers. The people came in massed brigades of all ages and sexes to shield the soldiers from the threatening mortars of the President.

The mortars were never fired. Fundamental humanity overcame the soldiery. Loyalty to the sovereign people prevailed, and the soldiers turned their back on the Commander in Chief. In that fact, too, there was heroism. And the dramatic encounter between civilian and soldiers, bound together by the bonds of love for the same country and for the same people, is what is celebrated as *salubong*, symbolic of a people determined to join hands and work for a new future.

I do not see the emotion and the drama of February 1986 being repeated today. Not yet. But is it coming? Will hubris again precipitate radical reform?

We can paraphrase Auden's Elegy to JFK:

What Edsa was, it was;
What it is fated to become
Depends on us
Remembering its birth,
How we choose to live
Will decide its meaning.

Where are the people?

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Noralyn Mustafa

THERE IS A HAND-GAME AMONG KINDERgarten children that I have always found amusing because it deals with a question that is of vital importance in any sphere of human endeavor, exercise or ritual.

The game is a sequence of two: in the first, hands are clasped with eight fingers interlaced and thumbs put together in the shape of a roof, while we declare: "This is the church." Then both forefingers go up and we say: "This is the steeple." The thumbs part at the command: "Open the door!" Then the inevitable question: "Where are the people?"

And we see a desolate, empty church.

In the second part, both hands are clasped with six fingers interlaced in between the palms so that when you open the door, the people are there, wiggling merrily, and the church comes alive.

Both manipulations accurately describe the administration of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

The first shows a government where the people are alienated from an administration that ignores them and, in return, they distrust and even consider illegitimate. In the second, there are people indeed, but they are enclosed in between the clasped palms of Ms Arroyo—they are the appointees and allies beholden to her, wiggling merrily out of sheer delight amid the torrents of perks, privileges and purses going their way at her behest.

So where are we, the people, otherwise known as the citizenry, a.k.a. constituents?

We are the unseen, invisible non-entities outside the Clasp, breaking our backs and working our hands to the bone to pay the EVAT and RVAT and all the other VATS in the Arroyo magic alphabet, which is meant to ensure the continuous flow of perks, privileges and purses for the well-being of the Clasp.

And to ensure our continued and perpetual bondage to the Clasp, we are now being hoodwinked into believing that the troubles that beset us are a result of "degenerate politics," which is the offspring of a bad Constitution. Therefore, this Constitution must be changed immediately, to save the "nation," which to them is the other name for the Clasp.

It is of no consequence that before she took over the presidency—bringing along her gang of degenerates—by way of a mob rule that she now vehemently condemns, we were living quite peacefully.

(By the way, in the definition of terms, it is important for us to know that "government," "democracy" and "state" can be used interchangeably to refer to Ms Arroyo, so that any opposition to her is branded as "destabilization efforts against the government" or an act "undermining democracy"; and those opposed to her continued stay in Malacañang, "enemies of the state.")

Now the question "where are the people?" in the seemingly inexorable rush to change the Constitution, to "shatter it to bits and mold it nearer to (her) heart's desire" is the very timely subject of the book just off the press, "Trapo Governance and the Cha-Cha Conspiracy" authored by former Undersecretary for Constitutional Reform Manuel Valdehuesa Jr., who was thoughtful enough to send me a copy.

Because I received it only last Thursday, I had just enough time to browse through it before writing this piece, and believe me, it was hard for me to put the book down. Though it tackles politics, a field that is beyond my ken, it is so engaging and so readable, it has given a political blockhead like me a very clear picture of why we are in the mess we're in.

Valdehuesa has no hidden agenda except what is clearly stated in the title; you can literally judge this book by its cover, which has a unique and very fitting design rendered by Ramon Sunico.

But Valdehuesa doesn't just tell us what's wrong. He shows us that something can be done: there is hope. And we need not fall into the trap of the so-called "people's initiative," which is actually a "sleight-of-word" redefined by Ms Arroyo's local government lackeys to refer to themselves.

And he tells us where the people are. They are in the barangays.

This is about empowerment of the people (last we looked at the Constitution, all government authority emanates from them) through barangay assemblies and "grass-roots" parliamentary discourse, all of which are provided for and stipulated in RA 7160 or the Local Government Code of 1991. Except that no one has bothered to implement the law.

In fact, right after the elections, right after the government coffers were reportedly wiped out to fund her campaign—consequently forcing her to announce that we have a "fiscal crisis"—one of Ms Arroyo's first policy announcements was the plan to cut the internal revenue allotment of local governments, which would have seriously crippled the country's smallest political unit—the barangay—where, in a true democracy, real power lies.

So, you might wonder: Where is Valdehuesa—now a gentleman-farmer in his place of origin, Cagayan de Oro—who has no hidden agenda and who sides with no person, party or persuasion, coming from?

Well, the epilogue (titled "Where Do I Stand?") should be good enough for the most suspicious minds. Excerpts:

"*The Constitution must become the Social Contract we never had!*

"No longer should we settle for the presumption that a document cobbled together by a few, adopted by a few, and promulgated by a few will automatically command the respect and compliance of the many... Such a document, served up *lutong macao*, to people with little or no idea of what role or rule it holds for them today and tomorrow, is not *ipso facto* a binding one ....

"Sure, let us amend the Constitution, which is the template of our Social Order, and fix the bureaucracy, which is its operating system, but most important of all, let us upgrade and energize its power source—the Filipino people!"

* * *

Comments to rubaiyat19@yahoo.com

The value of a title

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

SINCE THE TURN OF THE LAST CENTURY, THE ownership of land in our country has been determined through a Torrens title. An Australian definition of the title is presented as follows: "Under the Torrens Title system a Certificate of Title exists for every separate piece of land. The certificate contains a reference that consists of a volume and folio number, ownership details, easements and/or rights of way affecting the land and any encumbrances including mortgages, leases and other interests in the land."

A Senate report explains why property owners in Caloocan are concerned with what they believe is a crucial challenge to the Torrens system:

"In the August 12, 1997 issue of the Philippine Daily Inquirer, these landowners reiterated their request for a Senate inquiry into the land titling crisis affecting properties covered by the Hacienda Maysilo. They called on the government to stop claimants from titling big tracts of already titled and developed commercial and industrial properties in the areas. They stressed that unless swift action is taken, the Torrens system of land title registration would become useless, public confidence in commercial transactions would be destroyed, and overall economic development adversely affected."

So what was—and is—the actual dispute?

Let's begin with the mother property, so to speak. On May 3, 1917, Original Certificate of Title (OCT) No. 994, was issued. OCT 994 covers 1,660 hectares in what is now Caloocan and parts of Quezon City. That property was eventually subdivided. One of the smaller "subdivisions" is Lot 25-A3, also known as the Tuason Estate. This lot was recognized in no less than four Supreme Court decisions: G.R. No. L-22510, dated Feb. 6, 1925; G.R. No. L-23239, dated Dec. 31, 1925; G.R. No. L-30668, dated Aug. 28, 1929; G.R. No. L-33646, dated Dec. 29, 1930.

Lot 25-A3 was bought from Jose Rato Tuason in 1947 by the Araneta Institute of Agriculture, Inc. (AIA). On that property, AIA established a school, which is today known as the De La Salle-Araneta University.

From the time of the original purchase (which was undertaken in good faith), AIA occupied the land, faithfully paying the real estate taxes therefor, constructing buildings thereon, and subdividing it into several portions with the approval of the appropriate government agencies.

Thirty-two years later, a certain Jose B. Dimson filed a complaint against AIA. In his Dec. 18, 1979 complaint, Dimson alleged that he discovered that his land had been illegally occupied! According to him, he got his title to the land as attorney's fees from a certain Bartolome Rivera. Rivera alleged in turn that he inherited his title as an heir of Ma. Concepcion Vidal. AIA's case has been lumped with other cases filed in connection with OCT 994.

In 1997, a regional trial court ruled in favor of Dimson. The decision was subsequently upheld by the Court of Appeals and then by the Supreme Court. AIA has appealed the high court's verdict.

Some lawyers have told me that there is a legal principle at work, here, too: the Doctrine of Laches. It is to land what the statute of limitations—which sets specific periods for the filing of cases—is to certain suits or crimes.

Basically it would be like this: you buy a piece of land in good faith. You develop it, improve it; you may even, at certain points, sell off parts of the original property you bought to other people. Decades after you bought the land, someone comes along and claims that the land is his. The claimant naturally stands to benefit from all the improvements you put on the land. And anyone who bought a piece of that land from you, or bought from someone else who purchased a piece of that land from you, stands to lose his lot because of this claim. Had you been fairly warned that there was a dispute over the property you bought, would you have made improvements on that land, or would people have bought from you in good faith? And if the claim, made decades after improvements on the land have been made so obviously and publicly, is allowed to prosper, wouldn't it be unfair both to you and everyone else with titles to parts of the land you originally bought? That's the rationale behind the Doctrine of Laches.

One thing is sure: this case involves a huge property and so many people and entities. If AIA loses its appeal, its case will be the third precedent case affirming that OCT 994 of May 3, 1917 is not real. Anyone holding a TCT (Transfer Certificate of Title) from this OCT will, in essence, be considered by the courts to be holding a fake title.

Well, is there anyone else holding such TCTs? Yes, among them: the national government—450 hectares (covered by 1,254 land titles), and within its ambit are roads, national highways, portions of the North Expressway, Edsa, the Bonifacio Monument, public markets and other public areas; private/business owners—1,210 hectares (covered by thousands of land titles), which cover property occupied by the Manila Central University, University of the East, Eternal Garden Memorial, Ever Grand Central, Sony Corporation, Mojica Properties, to name a few.

Indeed, the implications of this case are far too wide and virtually all-embracing that its resolution requires no less than a Supreme Court of the Philippines sitting en banc. This certainly is one question that deserves the determination by the whole, not just a division, of our highest court.

* * *

Comments welcome at www.quezon.ph/blog

Memories, legacies of authoritarianism

COMMENTARY

Butch Hernandez

IN CYBERSPACE, THERE EXISTS A VIRTUAL KNOWLEDGE-genie called "Wikipedia." Ideas fly through the worldwide web faster than light. Unfortunately, we still use the 19th century QWERTY keyboard, so we have to resort to anagrams and mnemonics to speed up data entry. For example, we just tap out the characters I-M-H-O instead of laboriously typing out "in my honest opinion." To the dyed-in-the-wool Netizen, four keystrokes are all it takes to express sincerity.

WIKI stands for "What I Know Is..." and it perfectly describes Wikipedia. While this resource is neither authoritative nor infallible, it does give a fairly accurate gauge of the modern world's perception of a particular person, item, issue or topic. This is so because Wikipedia is "the free encyclopedia" that anyone with Internet access can add something to or edit in real time, instantaneously.

Here is an interesting Wikipedia entry: "Three things make Ferdinand Marcos different from any Philippine president before him: first, he created and led, along with Gen. Fabian Ver, Gen. Fidel Ramos and Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile, a military-backed regime that arrested, tortured and murdered thousands of Filipinos; second, the 14 years of his dictatorship warped and all but ruined the country's major institutions—chiefly the legislative, judiciary and the military; and third, he, along with his family and cronies, looted so much wealth from the country that up to now investigators have a difficult time determining precisely how many billions of dollars have been salted away."

Just a few days ago, the Foundation for Worldwide People Power (FWWPP) put the finishing touches to "Mga Tinig ng Himagsikan," a video documentary to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Edsa Revolution of 1986.

As part of the FWWPP's mandate, we endeavored to make the documentary compelling and interesting enough to appeal to youthful sensibilities. We test-screened the video before an audience composed almost entirely of young men and women who were born in or after 1986. The oldest in the audience was 21 years of age. We administered a survey to gauge audience reaction, and the results we got raised quite a few interesting points.

As many in our generation suspect, these young men and women have a very sketchy notion of Edsa I. Their knowledge of things—like the First Quarter Storm, the Rolex 12, the Jabidah Massacre and other similar events—from this particular point in Philippine history was even more limited.

They were incredulous when they saw on screen how Metrocom troopers accosted hapless long-haired teenagers and summarily snipped off their flowing locks. The images they were watching were so far removed from their own realities that they might as well have been watching a film about World War II.

On the other hand, everyone in this audience said they wanted to see more productions like "Mga Tinig ng Himagsikan" and the INQUIRER's "Edsa 20: Isang Larawan." Like the rest of us, they too have a right to the truth, preferably in high definition video and 5.1 Dolby digital audio.

Why has it been so hard to accurately remember an event so historically significant as Edsa I? More to the point, why has it been so easy to strip Edsa I of social relevance?

In 1999, the Gaston Z. Ortigas Peace Institute, the Ateneo de Manila University, the Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility, and the FWWPP co-convened the "Legacies of the Marcos Dictatorship: Memory, Truth-Telling and the Pursuit of Justice."

This multi-sectoral forum was the Southeast Asian segment of an international initiative, called "Legacies of Authoritarianism," led by the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The other areas of inquiry were Latin America and South Africa.

The entire exercise explored in scholarly fashion how people went on with their lives in the aftermath of repression and state-instigated violence. (The highlights of this comprehensive study are contained in "The Art of Truth-Telling About Authoritarian Rule," University of Wisconsin Press, 2005.)

Most of the participating countries—including ours—are emerging democracies, having shaken off their authoritarian yoke in the past 10 years or so. Others, like Cambodia, Indonesia, Thailand and Yugoslavia have just begun the process, while Argentina has been in transition for more than two decades.

The people from these countries share two characteristics: they all endured "widespread state violence that suppressed individual and group freedoms"; and in each country, persons and communities have emerged, wanting to speak about it.

In their introduction, the work's editors namely, Ksenija Bilbija, Jo Ellen Fair, Cynthia E. Milton and Leigh A. Payne, raise the following points:

First, political transition—from authoritarian rule and dictatorship to formal democratic governance—does not necessarily bring dramatic change in the lives of individuals.

Second, even with public processes [for truth-telling], individuals and groups feel excluded and certain truths remain taboo. Blanket amnesties and political accommodations—to avoid polarization and breakdown—have produced "forgive and forget" strategies that close off official avenues for public truth-telling and accountability for past violence.

Third, impunity, amnesty laws and legal systems that protect the legal and economic privileges of the powerful pose obstacles to investigation, prosecution and imprisonment for corruption and violence.

Finally, the similarities between the new democratic order and its old authoritarian predecessor heighten disillusionment with social and political change, and weaken the motivation to work toward it.

By the way, the Wikipedia entry also said "most of Marcos' accomplishments were overlooked after the Edsa Revolution" and that "according to a recent survey, many Filipinos prefer Marcos' rule because of the shape of the country today. Many admire his autocratic, willful style of government, saying that his style of leadership is sorely missed and needed in the post-Edsa Philippines where too much democracy has ruined the body politic, with fractious standoffs in Congress and deadlocks in the Senate; and actors as well as traditional politicians being elected into public office.

"On the other hand, many absolutely despise his regime, his shoving the free press into his pocket, his curtailing civil liberties such as free speech and the right to peaceably assemble, as well his dictatorial control over the government. There is no middle ground. It is quite evident that Marcos left behind a society that was polarized after the Edsa Revolution."

It took a lot of courage to face down the Marcos regime's mechanized armor and battle-tested Marines with nothing but prayers and determination. Apparently that amazing display of genuine People Power was not enough. Today's youth are closely watching us, wondering where that courage came from.

Butch Hernandez is executive director of the Foundation for Worldwide People Power (FWWPP).

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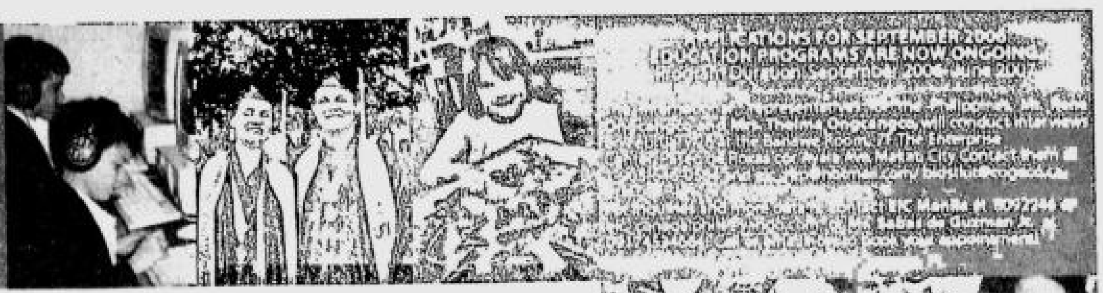

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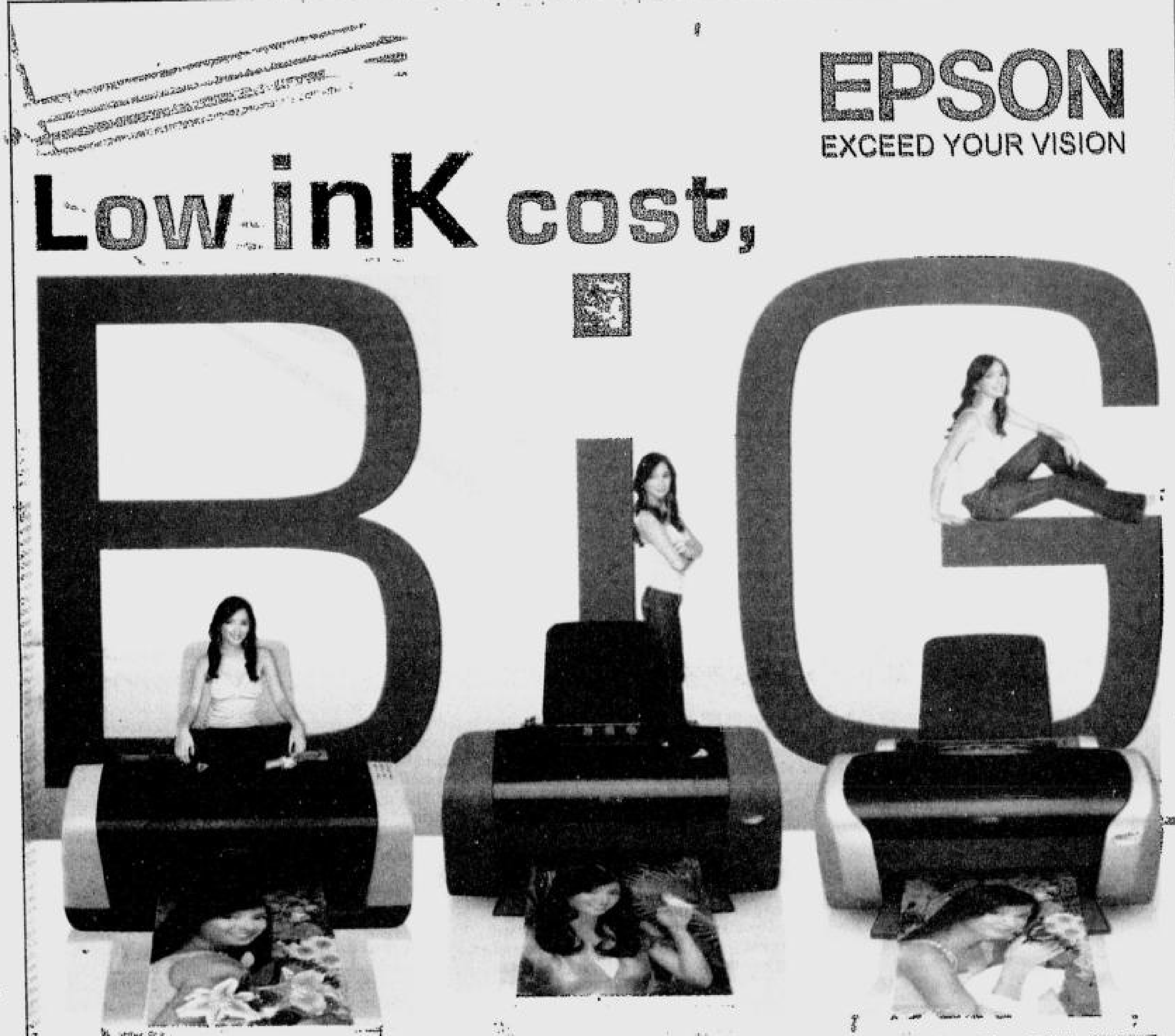

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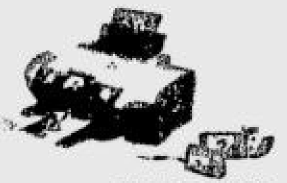

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Blasphemy in 'South Park'

IRREVERENT HUMOR IN CARTOONS? WHILE we're at it, what of the blasphemy of Jesus Christ and the vulgar disrespect of His holy mother in Jack cable TV's "South Park" series?

An episode depicts Jesus Christ as a nitwit. Another pits Him against a magical illusionist, making of the Son of God a clumsy tyro who cannot even do an illusion of multiplying loaves and fish. At the end of the episode, Jesus looks pathetic, and the viewer thinks it's funny.

And what of a "South Park" Blessed Virgin Mary with red liquid flowing between her two feet, and a voice-over: "She's a virgin, indeed!"

In Ebralinag vs. the Division Superintendent of Schools of Cebu, children of Jehovah's Witnesses defied their school and defended their religious belief. So did the members of Iglesia ni Cristo in Victoriano vs. Elizalde Rope Workers' Union. So did a Baptist nurse in St. Charles, Missouri who was fired because she refused to violate the teachings of her religion. And now, our angry Muslims brethren.

Here, in this Christian country, we allow "South Park."

—JO M. IMBONG,
executive director,
Family Media Advocacy Foundation,
comm._days@yahoo.com

More important than health care costs

THIS IS IN RESPONSE TO THE SPECIAL REport titled the "Debate on cheaper drugs rages amid high cost of health care." (PDI, 2/15/06)

The article quoted the book "A Call to Action" written by Pfizer's chair and CEO, Dr. Hank McKinnell. Unfortunately, excerpts from the book were taken out of context.

Dr. McKinnell's book is intended to stimulate a much-needed dialogue on the need for sustainable health care solutions around the globe. "A Call to Action" focuses on the much larger issue of the costs of the disease and the value of wellness, instead of merely computing the costs of health care. The latter approach has been detrimental to both the health and wealth of nations.

Regarding the specific issues of pricing medicines, it is true that the industry does not simply price a medicinal product to "recapture the R&D budget spent in development." It is far more complicated than that; a number of factors, including the high cost of R&D, are' considered in the final determination of a pharmaceutical product's price.

On the subject of research and development, it is our global responsibility to contribute toward the R&D of new medicines so that unmet medical needs of patients throughout the world are addressed. Only one out of 10,000 candidate molecules makes it through the grueling process of development and clinical trials, and the latest estimate of bringing a new product to the market has surpassed $1 billion. Countries must invest in the future of medicines to ensure that future cures are discovered.

It is also important for the public to know that Pfizer is doing its part to provide access not only to medicines but to better health care. Our innovative patient programs are now enjoyed by tens of thousands of Filipinos nationwide. Our "Sulit na Gamot" initiative educates consumers on the value of research in bringing about better health outcomes. Pfizer also continues to implement its largest community program, the "Leaders for Health," in partnership with the Department of Health and the Ateneo Graduate School. The program seeks to build the health care infrastructure in many doctorless municipalities all over the country. Since its launch in 2002, the program has benefited over 1 million Filipinos in 48 poor municipalities.

The discussion needs to be broadened to include the need to improve our health care infrastructure and not just focus on the cost of medicines. Pfizer is willing to participate in this endeavor.

—GERRY E. BACARRO,
president and country manager,
Pfizer, Makati City

Edsa I in news gallery

THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF EDSA I REminds me of my visit to Newseum in Arlington, Virginia, in 1997. While there, I noticed there was nothing about the historic Edsa I in its News History Gallery.

When I wrote the editor of Freedom Forum, the organization in charge of Newseum, about it, I asked him if Edsa I was deliberately left out because it was a bloodless uprising (unlike the one in China's Tiananmen Square), and therefore it was considered not worth featuring in the News History Gallery.

I told the editor that to us Filipinos, the exclusion of Edsa I was glaring because it was a very important milestone in man's struggle for freedom. I pointed out that history shows that people who died for freedom did not always achieve it. But we Filipinos, in an unprecedented act of courage, won freedom without shedding a drop of blood.

The editor of Freedom Forum replied, asking for a copy of the front page of a Philippine newspaper, featuring Edsa I. I wrote the INQUIRER editor in chief, informing her of the request and requesting her in turn if she could grant the same.

I have yet to visit Newseum again, but I am hopeful that the News History Gallery now features Edsa I.

—AMADO F. CABAERO,
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Across the NATION

Assistant Editor **Tony Bergonia**

Jolo bar blast won't stop RP-US war games

JOLO, SULU—THE BOMB EXPLOSION THAT KILLED A MAN AND wounded 28 others here on Saturday night will not stop the Balikatan exercises as police remained clueless on who, or what group, was behind the bomb attack.

US Army Lt. Colonel Mark Zimmer, public affairs officer of the Joint Special Operations Task Force Philippines, said "there are no plans of changing the schedules of our medical, dental and engineering action programs or any activities of the Balikatan in Sulu."

Filipino and American soldiers continued with their water well and school building construction in Maimbung town yesterday. They, however, were heavily secured. At least two MG520 helicopters and a P3 Orion spy plane were flying to ensure the soldiers' safety.

Zimmer refused to comment if he thought the explosion was meant to disrupt the Balikatan exercise, which opened Saturday afternoon.

"We don't want to speculate. We will not say anything until the investigation is completed," Zimmer added.

The lone fatality in the blast was identified as Domingo de Leon, a Filipino from Cavite City who belonged to a Manila-based firm contracted by the Americans to maintain portable toilets here.

De Leon, according to police, suffered multiple shrapnel wounds and third degree burns.

Sulu police chief Senior Supt. Ahirum Ajirim admitted that police could still not say who was behind the attack.

"We really have no idea, we're waiting for the results of the investigation," Ajirim said.

He said based on initial findings, the explosion inside the Vimar Videoke Place was caused by a type of dynamite commonly used for blast fishing.

Rosielyn Sajiin, the videoke bar's cashier, said the explosion happened in the third table from the entrance of the establishment.

Sajiin suffered burns and wounds in her face and legs.

Most of the injured were women working in the bar as guest relations officers. Four other Filipino soldiers were also wounded.

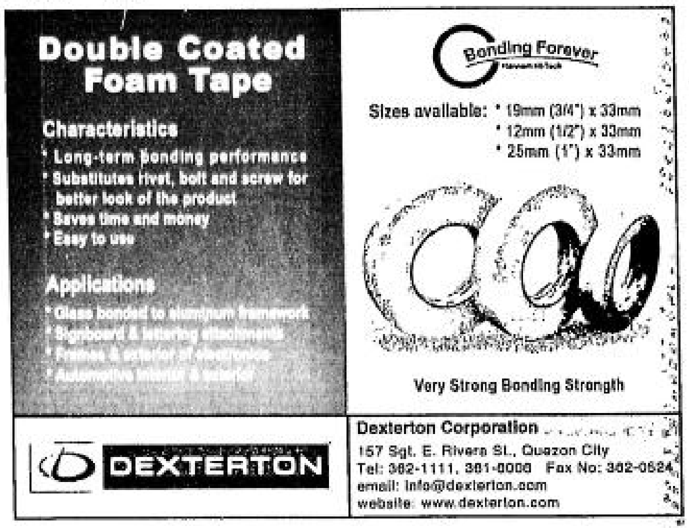
Ajirim said he had declared a full red alert status in Jolo, "and we are all in full combat position in the event [of another] explosion."

The explosion came after protests against the Balikatan in Jolo and the shooting of stray dogs allegedly by American soldiers.

An American military official defended the shooting of stray dogs, saying the animals were a danger to people.

"We do not condone the shooting of these animals, but we are also raising concern on the safety of our people, the safety concern of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the local civilians," said Col. James Linder, overall commander of the Joint Special Operation Task Force Philippines (JSOTFP).

"The animals that were destroyed appeared to be stray and unhealthy, and as I said we are looking into this and we are doing investigation to ensure that we are doing the proper procedure," Linder added. *Julie Alipala with a report from Jeoffrey Maitem, PDI Mindanao Bureau*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ONE of the Japanese dolls on exhibit at the Provincial Capitol Complex of Camarines Sur by the Japan Foundation.

Japanese dolls on tour reach Camarines Sur

PILI, CAMARINES SUR—JAPANESE DOLLS may be the most expensive in the world with a set that could be worth millions of pesos.

But, to a Japanese group that brought the dolls here, they are a mirror of Japan's culture.

"The appreciation of Japanese dolls is the first step to understand our culture," according to Tsotomu Suzuki, director of Japan Foundation, a group that promotes Japanese culture through exchange programs.

Suzuki said the Japanese dolls reflect their aspirations and customs as a distinct people and had been part of their tradition for thousands of years.

To celebrate the 50th year of Philippines-Japan Friendship, the Japan Foundation brought in to Camarines Sur 70 Japanese dolls for exhibit at the provincial capitol complex.

The Japanese doll exhibit has also toured Marikina last month and will be in Baguio City next month.

In cooperation with the provincial government of Camarines Sur, the Japanese doll exhibit will run until Feb. 19 at the function room of the Convention Center at the Capitol Complex here.

Gov. Ray Villafuerte said the exhibit will help entice investors to the province.

Villafuerte added that the provincial government also provides free Nihongo lessons to promote Japanese culture.

Suzuki said that, like the characters of their written language, the Japanese dolls express the realities of everyday life in Japan.

The dolls have distinctive regional attributes which, over the centuries, have evolved into many diverse forms.

He said Japanese dolls are not really toys but expressions of *koi* (love), traditions and everyday life which had been handed down from generation to generation. *Juan Escandor Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

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University of the East - Kalookan
"Kaunlaran St."
Mix Media, 29" x 29"

4th Place
MICHAEL JOHN L. PAMA
La Consolacion College - Bacolod
"Sama-Sama at Iisa,
Tayo Pilipino sa Pagbabago"
Mix Media, 27.5" x 34.25"

5th Place
MARK F. MICLAT
Tarlac State University
"Pag-ibig, Pag-asa at Pananalig Ang Pangunahing Kailangan ng Bawat Isa Tungo sa Totoong Tagumpay ng Pilipinas"
Mix Media, 27.5" x 34.25"

1st Honorable Mention
AUBREY D. TERRY
University of Northern Pilipinas - Vigan
"Sama-sama Tuloy-tuloy Pasulong Pataas Pilipinas"
Mix Media, 29" x 29"

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"This Way...Up"
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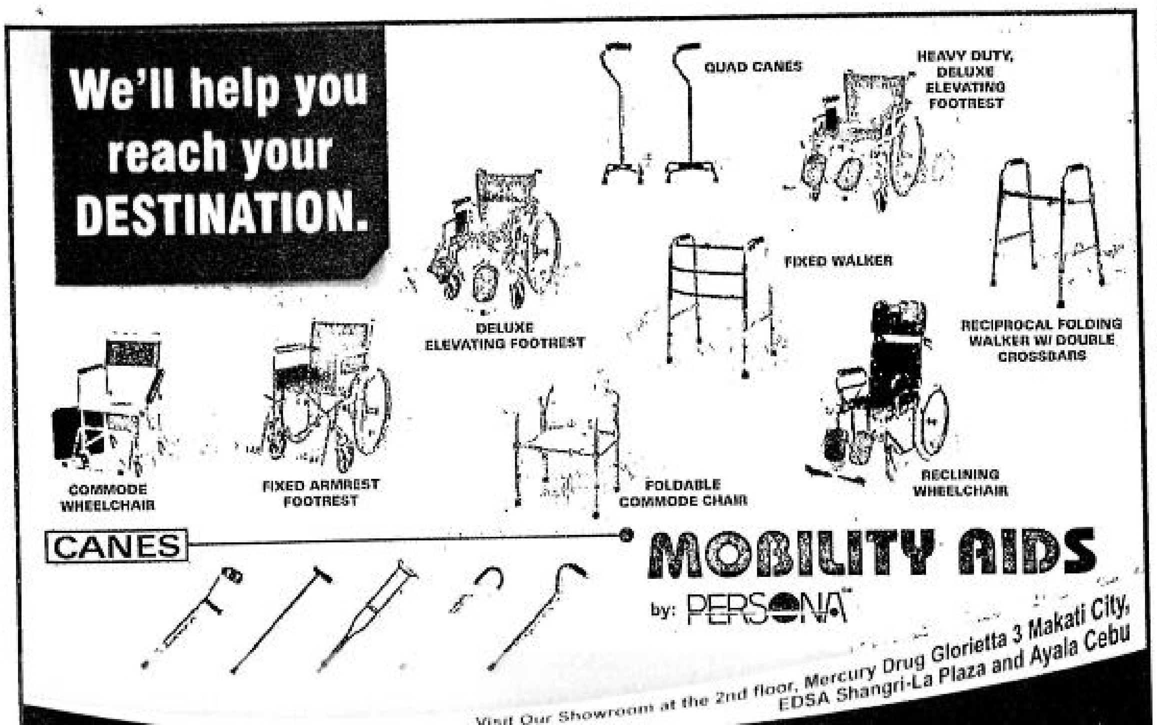

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Rubber planting seen step vs air pollution

DAVAO CITY—RUBBER FARMING DOES NOT only bring financial benefits but also helps clean the air, a local expert said.

Natural rubber is currently in high demand in the international market primarily because of the expansion of the automobile market of China and the expected growth of other key industrial countries.

But Dr. Eugenio Alcala, vice president for research and extension of the University of Southern Mindanao in Kabacan, North Cotabato, said aside from providing financial gains, rubber could help in restoring environmental health.

Alcala said mature rubber trees have the capacity "to sequester carbon."

He said based on initial results of a study, which he did not specify, it was found that a hectare of at least 21-year-old trees is capable of absorbing a cubic meter of carbon from the atmosphere.

"If this calculation is confirmed, natural rubber-producing countries can claim carbon credits based on the Kyoto Protocol," Alcala, also executive director of the Philippine Rubber Board Inc. (PRBI), said.

Rubber's role in cleaning the air is one of the pitches being used by the PRBI in pushing for the extensive cultivation of the trees in the country.

PRBI said it seeks to increase the country's rubber land to 1.5 million hectares from the current 100,000 hectares.

The provinces of Basilan, Zamboanga Sibugay and North Cotabato remain the country's major producers of natural rubber and also host the country's oldest rubber estates.

Alcala said Mindanao alone has a potential to expand its rubber area to 1.2 million hectares "without disturbing existing croplands."

Apart from extensive land available for cultivation, Alcala said Mindanao also has favorable weather. *Ryan Rosauro, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

ROUNDUP

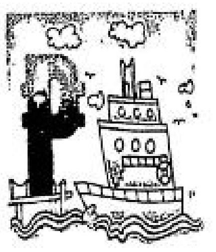
Farmer held for slay

MIDSAYAP, North Cotabato—Police here arrested a farmer for allegedly killing his father on Thursday. Midsayap police chief Supt. Chino Mamburam said the suspect, identified as Gerardo Aniñon, 44, of Barangay Villarica, repeatedly struck his father Jose, 65, during a spat over the turning on and off of lights in their ancestral home. He said the elder Aniñon fell to the floor but instead of stopping, the young Aniñon took a bolo and hacked his father to death. The suspect now faces parricide charges. *Edwin Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Army man charged

TACURONG CITY—An Army colonel charged with the Nov. 23 demolition of houses in Datu Abdullah Sangki town in Maguindanao has posted bail. Col. Jerry Jalandoni, commander of the 604th Infantry Brigade based here, and several other soldiers, were charged with violation of domicile, malicious mischief and robbery in band by 80-year-old Bai Nawila Pangilan at a local court. Pangilan told prosecutors that on Nov. 23, soldiers under Jalandoni told her and her family to vacate Barangay Kamasi in Datu Abdullah Sangki town. She said the soldiers returned later. One of them allegedly threw her food and others took turns throwing away her family's clothing. While some soldiers demolished their house, others allegedly took livestock. Jalandoni denied these, citing video shown on a local TV newscast. *Nash Maulana, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Higher port revenue



PARANG, Maguindanao—The Autonomous Region Ports Authority (RPA) said it seeks to increase its revenues to P24 million from the current average of P240,000 within the next five years. The agency said the increase in collection would enable it to offer shipping firms safer, antiterror compliant facilities for cargo and passengers. RPA Manager Alejandre Ampatuan said ARMM Gov. Zaldy Uy Ampatuan wanted planned ports upgrading done by using income from port fees. Dr. Endatun Talusan, Polloc Port manager, said the port, built in 1976, is underutilized. *Nash Maulana, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

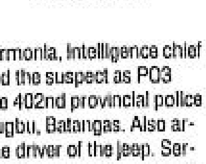
2 soldiers wounded

TANDAG, Surigao del Sur—Two soldiers were seriously wounded in a clash with communist rebels in Tago town on Feb. 15. Lt. Joel Recasa, spokesperson of the 58th Infantry Battalion based in Tago town, some five kilometers from this capital town, said about 20 New People's Army (NPA) rebels ambushed the government soldiers who were on patrol in Sitio Ibu in Barangay Anahao-Daan. Surigao del Sur police chief Senior Supt. Arthur Sanchez identified the wounded soldiers as Pfc. Ramer Ucab and Pfc. Julius Palahang, who were brought to a medical center here. Maria Malaya, National Democratic Front spokesperson in the province, denied Recasa's claim that a rebel was killed. In a phone call to the INQUIRER, Malaya said Wednesday's ambush was part of an intensified campaign by the NPA against the government to force President Macapagal-Arroyo to step down. *Bert Pacate, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

'Truth caravan'

CITY OF CALAPAN—Thousands of Mindoreños welcomed the arrival here on Feb. 17 of a nationwide caravan, dubbed Lakbay Mamamayan Para sa Katotohanan at Reporma, which started in Cotabato and Dipolog on Feb. 1 and Feb. 7, to generate awareness on indigenous people's rights, agrarian reform, mining hazards and constitutional reform. Bert Almonte, one of the local organizers, said the motorcade started in the morning from Roxas town followed by Mass in Pinamalayan town. *Madonna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Bomb material seized



CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—The Cavite police confiscated 140 sacks of ammonium nitrate, a chemical used in making bombs, in a jeep and arrested a police officer who acted as escort of the illegal shipment in a checkpoint in Carmona, Cavite on Wednesday. Supt. Rodel Sermonia, intelligence chief of the Cavite police, identified the suspect as PO3 Nixon Ilagan, assigned at the 402nd provincial police mobile group based in Nasugbu, Batangas. Also arrested was Jovito Berido, the driver of the jeep. Sermonia said the chemicals were hidden beneath sacks of charcoal and were due to be delivered to Tanza. *Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

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Mild quake hits 3 Mindanao cities

DAVAO CITY—A MILD EARTHQUAKE HIT AT least three cities in Mindanao yesterday morning.

No one was reported hurt in the quake that lasted for several seconds.

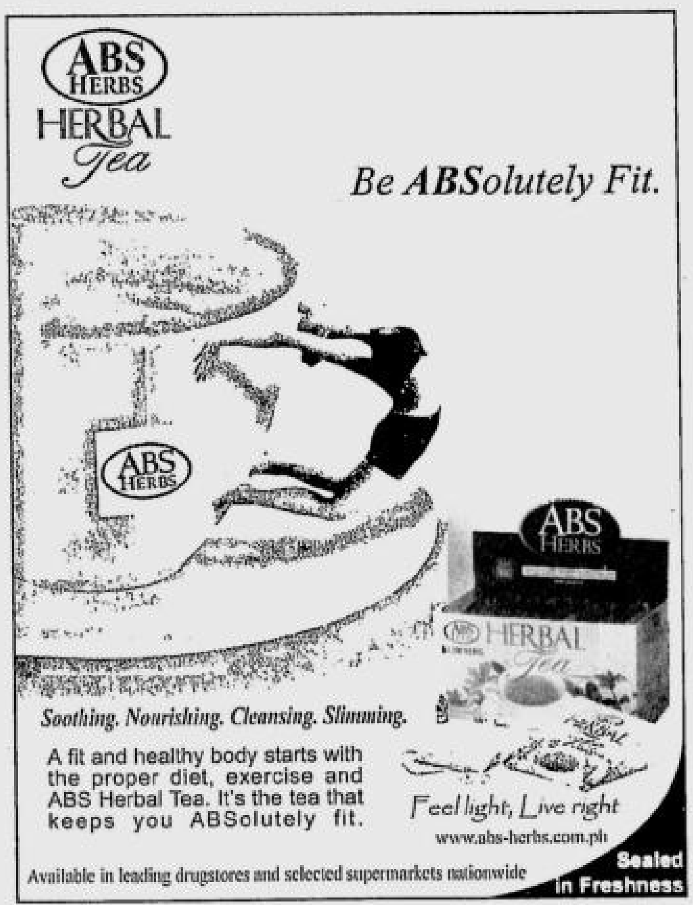
Ferdinand Taglucop, science analyst of the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) in Southern Mindanao, said the tremor, with its epicenter at 120 kilometers off the ocean deep southwest of Digos town, Davao del Sur, occurred at around 8:49 a.m.

The quake of tectonic origin registered Intensity 3 in the Richter scale in General Santos City and Intensity 2 in the cities of Davao and Kidapawan, Taglucop said.

The Office of the Civil Defense in Southern Mindanao said no untoward incident was reported.

With the rains continuing in several parts of Mindanao over the weekend, Taglucop said the towns near steep mountains could be "susceptible to landslide."

Dennis Jay Santos, PDI Mindanao Bureau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Postal Code:
Home Tel. / Fax No.:
Civil Status:
Date of Birth (mm/dd/yy):
Age:
Place of Birth:
Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female
Occupation:
Monthly Income:
Company:
Business Address:
Postal Code:
TIN #:
SSS #:
Office Tel. / Fax No.:
e-mail Address:
Send my Insurance documents to my: ☐ Business Address ☐ Home Address
I want the coverage of: ☐ PLAN 200 ☐ PLAN 400 ☐ PLAN 500 ☐ PLAN 800 ☐ PLAN 1000 ☐ PLAN 2000 ☐ Others ______
I prefer to pay: ☐ Monthly ☐ Quarterly ☐ Semi-annually ☐ Annually
Insurance benefits are to be paid to: FIRST MIDDLE LAST
Beneficiary/ies:
Relationship to you:

1. During the past 5 years, have you consulted a physician for medical attention or surgical advice, or been confined in a hospital, sanitarium or similar institution? ☐ YES ☐ NO
2. Have you ever been told you had: cancer, diabetes, epilepsy, heart trouble, high blood pressure or tuberculosis, kidney disorder, nervous disorder or HIV-AIDS? (If YES, underline which ailment.) ☐ YES ☐ NO
3. Are you now in good health? ☐ YES ☐ NO
4. What is your HEIGHT?__________ ft. WEIGHT?__________ lbs.

Important: If you answered "YES" to any of the questions above, please give full details. Include doctor's name and address, hospital, nature, date and result of consultation, ailment or impairment. Use separate sheet if necessary.

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✓
Signature of Applicant (SIGN HERE) Date

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PROPOSED INSURED (Printed Name and Signature)

APPLICANT-OWNER
Printed Name and Signature (if other than Proposed Insured)

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INSULAR LIFE

Danger signs of landslides

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

WATCHING OUT FOR SIGNS of a landslide can save lives.

Standing objects like trees, posts, poles and fences that tilt give hints of ground movement and the possible loosening of soil and rocks, according to the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs).

Cracks on mountain slopes and loose deposits indicate that these are not stable areas and are prone to bigger landslides, Phivolcs chief Renato Solidum said.

Solidum asked people to stay away from steep slopes traversed by streams and creeks that can funnel the soil and other debris downstream.

He also asked people to look out for road cuts, which indicate that the soil underneath is weak.

In the case of the killer landslides in St. Bernard, Southern Leyte, Solidum said heavy rainfall in the area—480 millimeters from Feb. 1 to 16 compared with the monthly average of 137 mm—most likely triggered the disaster.

"There had been so much rain in the area and water added to the weight of the soil," Solidum said.

The presence in the area of a fault zone that generates earthquakes was a contributory factor, he said.

A volcano, Mt. Kabalian, lies in St. Bernard but this has been inactive and the tremors there on Friday could not have been caused by volcanic activity, according to Solidum.

Install rain gauges

Geologist Arnulfo Cabantog of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau earlier asked landslide-prone upland villages in the Central Luzon areas of the Sierra Madre and Zambales mountain ranges to install improvised rain gauges because very few of these instruments had been installed by the weather bureau.

Rain gauges are used to measure the amount of rainfall in a particular area. The level of water trapped in a container at certain hours can help upland villagers know if heavy rains had fallen in the area.

Cabantog said the measurements were bases to guard against landslides and flash floods.

The provinces of Aurora, Nueva Ecija, Bulacan and Tarlac in Central Luzon, and the mountainous villages in Quezon were hit by landslides and floods in November and December 2004. The disaster left more than 1,000 dead and about 5,000 families homeless.

PVC pipe

The improvised rain gauges, according to Cabantog, could use PVC pipes that are four inches in diameter. The top should be open to catch the rainfall while the bottom should be well sealed to prevent dripping.

This, he said, should be placed in an open space in a common area such as a school, barangay hall or chapel.

A ruler should come in handy to measure the water level. When the level reaches 100 mm, or 10 centimeters in less than five hours, Cabantog said this should be taken as sign by residents to evacuate to safer ground.

Village officials should designate a person to measure the rainfall regularly and a team to share the information with the other villagers.

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration considers rains in an area heavy if gauges measure 7.5 mm an hour. In Japan, Cabantog said, 200 mm of rainfall was the standard warning for possible landslides.

Residents must also consider the number of days rains have drenched an area. If the mountain soil was saturated for days, as happened during the four successive typhoons in 2004, another rainfall could trigger a landslide.

Residents should also watch out for damming at the peaks of hills and mountains. A sign to watch out for is when there's little water flowing in a river even when it is raining, Cabantog said.

JANI ARNAIZ/PDI VISAYAS BUREAU

CHOPPERS wait in line in the rice fields of St. Bernard to conduct a search and rescue mission in the landslide-hit portion of the town.

Officials …

From page A1

nomical Services Administration (Pagasa). La Niña is a weather phenomenon characterized by heavy rains.

In fact, in the next 24 hours, heavy rains brought by La Niña are expected to hit Davao Oriental, the Cotabato provinces and the Caraga region—all in Mindanao, Pagasa said.

Without citing specific places, Cruz said landslides, in fact, had already been reported in other areas of the country. *(See story on Page A4.)*

Mapping

Cruz said the government had begun mapping out the towns prone to floods and landslides. Once the list is ready, he will ask the media to help disseminate the information.

Officials of the National Disaster Coordinating Council will also discuss the matter with governors, mayors and village chiefs.

The House committee on housing and urban development yesterday asked the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to promptly publish the list of all landslide- and disaster-prone areas in the country to adequately forewarn the public.

Committee chair Rep. Eduardo Zialcita of Parañaque said the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) had come up with a landslide-susceptibility map as early as 2004 but nothing was done to relay that information to local government units (LGUs).

Zialcita said the MGB report would be useful in the government's assessment of what had been done to educate LGUs about the map.

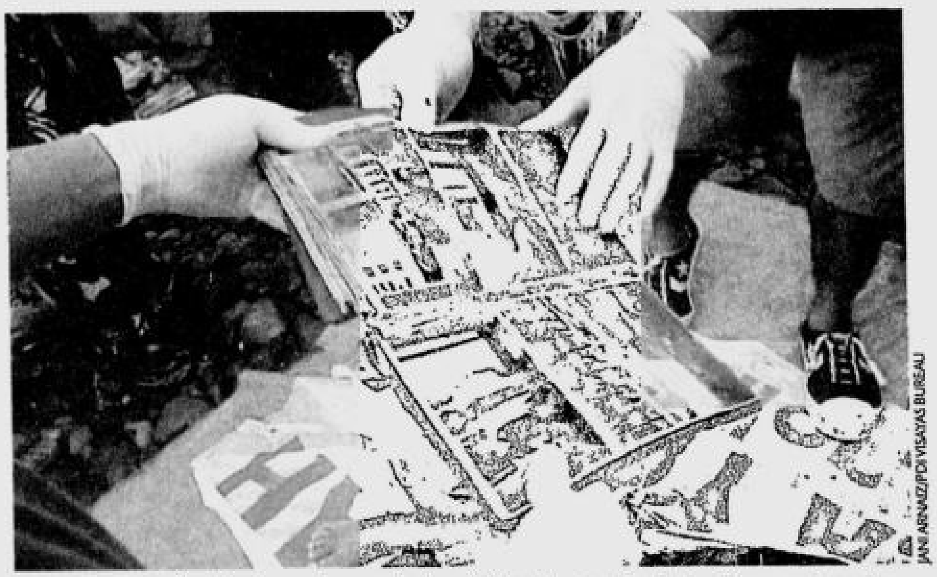
He lamented that the MGB had failed to issue the necessary warning to residents of St. Bernard and, thus, the catastrophic landslide that buried an entire village in the town.

Preventable

"The [MGB must] update us on how they have conducted their information dissemination for their landslide susceptibility map," said Zialcita.

On Saturday, an official of an environment protection group blamed the government for failing to take safety measures that could have prevented the landslide.

Clemente Bautista, national coordinator of Kalikasan-People's Network for the Environment, said the government had identified St. Bernard as a landslide-prone area in 2003.



JANI ARNAIZ/PDI VISAYAS BUREAU

AMONG those found in the mud was a victim still clutching to this photo album, perhaps the only worldly possession he tried to save before he was buried alive.

He said the deaths could have been prevented, if not minimized, if the government had acted early enough by initiating a massive reforestation program and by setting up a locally based early warning system.

"There should be proper information dissemination of all matters pertaining to potential landslides and other disasters. A publication of all areas that are vulnerable to landslides should be the first step in educating and forewarning our people," Zialcita said.

Early warning

There are three things that local officials can do to prepare for a disaster, officials said.

One is to evacuate the residents to safer ground. Another is to apply an engineering solution to an impending disaster, such as the building of dikes. The third and cheapest way is to set up an early warning system, such as the one now in use in Aurora and Quezon provinces.

Cruz narrated how residents in flood-prone areas in Southern Luzon had placed posts that can measure the rise of water in a river.

Alert level 4, for example, would mean that the people need to leave their homes for higher ground.

"In Quezon, when (the water) reaches level 4, the mechanism (in place) is to ring the church bells. One person would ride a bike telling the people that the water is rising. There are many indigenous and creative ways (to set up) early warning devices," the defense secretary said.

The Citizens Disaster Response Center (CDRC) has urged the government to adopt concrete measures to address the causes of people's vulnerability to disasters.

CRDC advocacy officer Katharina Ann Berza said in a statement that an average of 317 disasters hits the country every year, affecting millions of Filipinos.

She noted a rising frequency in disasters during the last decade and a subsequent increase in the number of people affected. Last year, a total of 10.4 million people were affected by 440 disasters. Ten years ago, 408 disasters affected 9.9 million people.

"One would assume that given these disasters, a comprehensive disaster management system and program should have already been in place and a separate government body that gives special and undivided attention to the many tasks of disaster management formed," CRDC said.

Disappointingly, the CRDC observed, the disaster response system in the country was reactive, emergency-focused and relief-centered.

The group noted that while the government was allotting more than 30 percent of its annual budget to foreign debt servicing, it was setting aside a measly 0.1 percent for calamity funds.

For his part, Von Hernandez, campaigns director of Greenpeace Southeast Asia, urged the government to prepare for the consequences of logging and climate change.

"There had been warnings that the combined threats of destructive logging and an increase in extreme weather events caused by climate change would intensify the impact of disasters," Hernandez said in another statement. *With reports from Michael Lim Ubac and Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Amsterdam …

From page A1

establishments opening their doors and flinging back their red curtains, hundreds of tourists and locals seized the opportunity to see a prostitute's bedroom, watch a brief live peep show or chat with a lap dancer.

Harrowing reports of forced prostitution and human trafficking have caused a public outcry in recent months and even prompted calls from councilors for the 800-year-old red light district to be shut down, to the fury of many sex workers.

Stories of petty crime and gang violence also dominate.

"The open day is not only to promote the red light district but also to help change the image of the area because we think it is too negative," said organizer Mariska Majoor, a former prostitute who now runs an information center for the district.

"There are not just problems here," she said.

Prostitution has been fully legal in the Netherlands since 2000, and sex workers are self-employed and subject to tax.

However, one rights group estimates that around 3,500 women are trafficked to the Netherlands each year from eastern Europe and Asia to work in secret brothels or illegal escort agencies, where they are often held captive and abused.

Tourist authorities admit the district—a clutch of narrow alleys and canals lined with sex shops, brothels and neon signs—is as big an attraction as Amsterdam's museums and coffee shops, where marijuana is freely smoked and sold.

Every night visitors throng the streets, agog at the scantily clad women sitting behind huge red-lit windows, but only a fraction venture inside.

"This is a very good idea," said 28-year-old Dutchman Maarten Ritsema, grinning after experiencing his first ever lap-dance at the Bar La Vie en Proost.

"I've never been inside anywhere like this before … it's pretty casual, not as tense or hostile as I imagined," he said. *Reuters*

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A Personal and Collective Privilege Speech on Serious Revenue Generation and On the Term-Sharing Agreement at the Committee on Ways & Means

By: Congressman Herminio G. Teves

February 13, 2006

Mr. Speaker, fellow members of this august body, I rise on a Personal and collective Privilege on the matter of revenue generation and the term-sharing agreement of the Chairmanship at the Committee on Ways & Means.

This representation served diligently as Senior Vice Chairman of said committee in the 11th, 12th and now the 13th Congress. I have always been passionate about revenue generation. I believe that it is only through higher revenues that we can balance the budget and reduce our dependence on borrowings. But the tax laws that we pass in this chamber are for naught because so much revenue per type of tax escape the tax net due to systemic failure and graft in the country's main tax collection agencies, the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the Bureau of Customs.

I have fervently proposed several measures that are designed to reduce or minimize corruption in our revenue collection as well as address several systemic errors at the BIR. I personally believe that with these proposed measures we will be able to maximize revenue take and thereby, achieve a balanced budget the soonest possible time.

A cornerstone proposal from this representation is the deletion of the secrecy and confidentiality provisions in tax payments under the 1997 Tax Code. This will help institute transparency and reduce connivance between taxpayers and tax collectors. Said connivance is the biggest source of graft and has already been draining the government's coffers for quite a long time.

I also proposed to President Arroyo that an **Executive Task Force be created to estimate potential revenue per type of tax,** such as individual income tax, corporate income tax, value added tax, excise tax, etc., and another **Task Force that will undertake audit on collection vis-a-vis potential revenues.** Nobody is currently mandated to audit revenue collection, not even the Commission on Audit (COA).

On the excise tax of sin products, the **DOF advocated for the reclassification of brands based on current market prices** to generate a revenue of P27.7 billion. The World Health Organization recommended that cigarettes must be taxed high (similar to other countries) to make it prohibitively expensive so as to generate revenue and curb smoking harmful to health especially among the youth. President GMA herself made a public pronouncement that **"there is need to address the harmful effects of the so-called sin products" by instituting an adjustment in the tax rates thereon vis-a-vis the actual market retail price.**

Congress, however, watered down the proposed indexation of sin taxes and instead approved a mere 20% increase in the tax rates. This representation voted 'No' to this watered down version. Thus, he was excluded in the bicameral committee on the said tax measure, after which I published an article on the subject **"How serious are we in raising revenue for our government"** Mr. Speaker, respected colleagues, actual revenue collection from the Sin Tax Law registered at a dismal P2.96 billion last year, 80% short from the projected P15 billion additional revenue from this tax measure. *(Business World, February 2, 2006)*

Chairman Lapus designated this Representation as Chair of the sub-committee on oversight. Immediately thereafter, said sub-committee undertook several inter-agency meetings and conducted in-depth studies on each type of tax and came up with estimates of potential number of taxpayers and expected revenue vis-a-vis BIR's collection. It was uncovered that there are loopholes in our tax system that needs to be addressed if the government is indeed serious in generating the much-needed revenues without resorting to borrowing.

On the Individual Income Tax: 2004 Collection is P 95.8 billion whereas the potential collection is estimated at P 150 billion.

It was uncovered that the potential number of tax payers on individual income tax alone is approximately 7.07 Million based on statistical data from NSO, LTO, DOF and Bureau of Local Government Finance, SSS and GSIS. On automatic withholding from compensation earners, the recorded number of employees with wages/salaries of over P5,000 monthly is 5,370,181 while actual number that paid under the substituted filing mechanism is 2,855,500, a difference of 4,216,819. This poses a shortfall in collection amounting to a minimum of P35.0 billion. The BIR nor the DOLE has no list of employers who could have withheld the income tax from their employees but failed to remit the same to the BIR.

On self-employed individuals. The SSS database showed 5.28 million self-employed members but BIR's self-employed individual taxpayers only reached 433,876 or a mere 8.2% of the potential. If we compare this to the data of the LTO, there are approximately 3,583,000 privately owned cars and trucks registered.

In 2004, the number of self-employed individuals who filed income tax returns totaled 694,305 and those who actually paid only totaled 291,601 with payments amounting to P 4.854 B and P 7.553 B as withholding at source, a total of only P 12.40B or 12.29% of the tax paid by employees as withholding.

On the Corporate Income Tax: The 2004 Collection is P 131.68 billion wherein the projected CIT would amount to P 180 billion.

The number of corporations registered with SEC is 304,070 while actual number that filed corporate income tax (CIT) is 115,582 or 38% of total number of SEC registrants. The number of companies that actually paid their CIT is 70,434 or 23.16% paid CIT amounting to P 131.168 billion.

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) should be mandated to furnish the DOF and BIR the lists of corporations by location, primary purpose of business activity, capitalization, and major incorporators in order for the BIR and the DOF to be able to match information submitted to them by companies. Similarly, the net income after tax on each player of industries and corporations should also be given to the BIR.

Value Added Tax (VAT) – the most abused form of tax by taxpayers.

In 2004 total vatable sales of 161,536 players is P4.039 trillion while the zero-rated sales and exempt sales are P699.094B and P 471.209B respectively. These are not included in the output VAT computation. The total VAT collected amounted to only P 72.892B or 1.8% of sales **whereas the projected VAT is P 124.54 billion.**

The government used to collect 3% sales tax on most goods and services, however, this was replaced by a 10% VAT. It is sad to note though that because of certain loopholes in the VAT system coupled with abuses on input VAT deduction and corruption, the VAT revenue collected is very much lower than what could have been collected on the 3% sales tax.

Bureau of Internal Revenue Summary of Quarterly VAT (2550Q) For Year 2004

Site	Taxable Sales	Zero-rated sales	Exempt sales/receipts	Total Output Tax	Total Input Tax	VAT PAID	Effective VAT Rates	No. of Taxpayer
CEBU	50.90 B	4.625 B	583.64 M	5.09 B	4.92 B	855.80M	1.68	8,565
LTS	1.525 T	564.65 B	447.40 B	152.55 B	110.22 B	42.24 B	2.81	1,046
MKT	392.21 B	28.99 B	9.02 B	39.22 B	32.33 B	9.70 B	2.47	34,434
MLA	207.22 B	66.69 B	4.19 B	20.72 B	20.95 B	5.99 B	2.89	41,354
QCY	692.99 B	34.14 B	10.02 B	69.30 B	60.21 B	13.51 B	1.95	76,137
TOTAL	**2.868 T**	**699.09 B**	**471.21 B**	**286.88 B**	**228.62 B**	**72.89 B**	**2.54**	**161,536**

The 1st half of 2005 (excluding Cebu) shows a total sales of P 1,511.794B, the zero-rated is P294.051B and exempt sales is P234.72. The tax paid is only P 14.739 B or 0.97% less than one percent (1%) of sales. On sales to exempt entities alone VAT deficiency is P47.12 B in 2004 and P23.47B in the 1st half of 2005.

January – June 2005

Site	Taxable Sales	Zero-rated sales	Exempt sales/receipts	Total Output Tax	Total Input Tax	VAT PAID	No. of Filed Returns
CEBU	DATA NOT YET AVAILABLE						
LTS	686.08B	212.37 B	216.95 B	70.04 B	51.43 B	6.70 B	1,768
MKT	99.93 B	20.62 B	9.17 B	16.14 B	12.92 B	1.59 B	35,029
MLA	20.52 B	35.00 B	2.05 B	5.46 B	265.49 M	952 M	23,110
QCY	176.50 B	26.05 B	6.54 B	28.37 B	24.17 B	5.45 B	56,813
TOTAL	**983.02 B**	**294.05 B**	**234.72 B**	**120.02 B**	**88.77 B**	**14.69 B**	**116,720**

In my letter to BIR Commissioner dated Nov. 21, 2005, I questioned why the BIR did not implement Revenue Regulation No. 2-88 Section 4 where the practice to allow VAT registered sellers to automatically deduct their sales to exempt and zero rated in their output VAT declaration is wrong. Similarly, I mentioned that under Revenue Regulation No. 9-89 provision on mixed transaction states that "when the tax payer is engaged in zero rated and effectively zero rated sales as well as taxable domestic and exempt sales of goods and services and the amount allowable, input tax paid cannot be directly and entirely attributed to anyone in the transactions. It shall be allotted proportionately to each category of transactions. BIR's consent to totally deduct all input VAT to the reduced output VAT is a double whammy to our government. The point that I raised in said letter was met with a deafening silence.

The telecommunications is now the biggest and most profitable industry. The PLDT, the leading telecoms company, is expected to surpass P 30 B in net income for CY 2005.

This industry has a huge potential VAT revenue if the BIR is not remiss in their tax collection effort. In a letter addressed to Her Excellency, Pres. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo dated January 26, 2006 that was coursed through the Honorable Speaker Jose de Venecia, this Representation conveyed the tax payments of the three largest telecoms players. For PLDT, VAT payments as percentage to sales is quite low. For 1999 it was 1.28%, in 2000- 0.82%; 2001- 1.12%; 2002-1.64%; 2003-1.58%; and 2004 - 2.54%.

For Globe telecoms, their VAT payments as percentage of their sales is as follows: 1999 negative 3.43%, 2000- negative 9.29%; 2001-negative 7.60%; 2002-negative3.57%; 2003- negative 0.01 % and 2004 - positive 0.44%

For Globe in 2004 exempt sales is P419.1 M or 0.98% while sales to zero-rated entities is P3.105 B or 7.28%. A total of P3.524 B or 8.26% considered non-vatable.

For Smart telecoms, their VAT payments as percentage to their sales is as follows: 1999 - 0.69%, 2000- negative 0.68%; 2001- positive 2.26%; 2002- positive 0.53%; 2003 – positive 0.48% and 2004 negative 0.56%.

In 2004, Smart's alleged sale to exempt entities is P6.734 B or 8.2% to zero-rated entities P15.565 B or 19.33% a total of P22.599 or 27.53% considered non-vatable.

History on VAT payment of the Three (3) Major Telecom's Companies:

PLDT

Year	Total Sales	Exempt Sales	Zero Rated Sales	Output VAT	Input VAT	Input VAT Carried Over	Tax Payable	VAT Paid as % to total sales	Deficiency in VAT payments
1999	P 41.077 B	P 5.041 B	P 6.617 B	P 2.367 B	P 0.786M	none	0.527	1.28%	638,287,166.85
2000	44.270 B	5.246 B	8.950 B	2.706 B	1.547 B	none	0.364	0.82%	1,054,757,186.35
2001	45.681 B	4.211 B	8.421 B	2.870 B	994.4 M	(7.362 M)	0.513	1.12%	750,218,417.96
2002	35.246 B	2.914 B	9.982 B	2.988 B	620.4 M	None	0.577	1.64%	711,916,885.99
2003	45.820 B	3.620 B	11.759 B	3.044 B	685.9 M	none	0.724	1.58%	813,983,889.27
2004	58.240 B	3.826 B	14.942 B	3.947 B	658.7 M	None	1.483	2.54%	393,498,053.20

GLOBE

Year	Total Sales	Exempt Sales	Zero Rated Sales	Output VAT	Input VAT	Input VAT Carried Over	Tax Payable	VAT Paid as % to total sales	Deficiency in VAT payments
1999	P 6.475 B	none	none	P 647.5 M	P 0.876M	351.05M)	(0.222)	-3.43%	-
2000	15.961 B	none	none	1.596 B	2.889 B	(222.27 M)	(1.483)	-9.29%	-
2001	25.773 B	none	none	2.577 B	4.531 B	(1.276 B)	(1.958)	-7.60%	-
2002	34.676 B	none	none	3.467 B	5.167 B	(1.958 B)	(1.237)	-3.57%	-
2003	39.915 B	none	none	3.991 B	3.986 B	(1.237 B)	(0.280)	-0.01%	-
2004	42.641 B	419.1 M	3.105 B	3.991 B	3.447 B	(2.807 M)	0.190	0.44%	162,037,994.13

SMART

Year	Total Sales	Exempt Sales	Zero Rated Sales	Output VAT	Input VAT	Input VAT Carried Over	Tax Payable	VAT Paid as % to total sales	Deficiency in VAT payments
1999	P 8.384 B	none	none	P 838.47 M	P 0.581 B	(4.347 M)	0.583	0.69%	-
2000	24.468 B	none	none	2.446 B	2.601 B	none	(0.167)	-0.68%	-
2001	31.597 B	none	none	3.159 B	3.871 B	(167.53 M)	(0.715)	-2.26%	-
2002	45.826 B	812.42M	2.311 B	4.270 B	3.971 B	(715.50 M)	0.244	0.53%	67,590,727.59
2003	57.802 B	4.834 B	5.722 B	4.724 B	3.198 B	none	0.277	0.48%	778,272,758.38
2004	82.053 B	6.734 B	15.865B	5.945 B	4.784 B	none	(0.461)	-0.56%	393,498,053.20

It is apparent that from 1999 – 2001 Smart had no sales to exempt and zero-rated and for Globe only in 2004 that declared exempt and zero-rated sales, why?

While consumers pay the whole of 10% VAT, it appears, however, that this is not being remitted to the government. What is far worse is that players do not declare sales to exempt and zero rated as vatable and over declare their input VAT thereby reducing amount of tax, disregarding BIR's Regulation RMC 17-96, Section 4 of RR-2-88 and RR 9-89 with regards to exempt and zero rated sales.

Not only are the players of the telecommunication industry not declaring as output VAT on their sales to exempt and zero rated sellers. They are not paying VAT on the sales of **cell cards** that companies claim to be the biggest bulk of their sales. The reason given is that the payment of VAT shall be made upon the utilization of the card, in contrast to excise taxes that are automatically collected upon withdrawal of the goods from the warehouse. As to why the BIR agreed to said argument remains a puzzle.

This representation is doubtful whether the projected additional revenue on the expanded VAT from 10% to 12% and the 12% VAT on fuel, power, air and water transport can be realized if the systemic errors in the VAT collection as practiced by the BIR will not be corrected. Firstly, the input VAT on operational vatable goods and services is 12%. Secondly, the input VAT on capital expense of the power, oil, air and water transport industries may not be totally utilized after few years as what happens to the telecommunication players where VAT on capital expense took several years to be utilized.

Undertaking all these proposals to increase tax collection from individual income tax both from the withholding of employees and from self-employed individuals, increase number of corporate taxpayers corresponding increase in corporate income tax (CIT) and increase collection of value added tax based on existing BIR Circular and Regulations on the matter will more than generate revenue enough to achieve a balanced budget.

If however, our leaders are anxious to have additional revenue to finance important projects and increase food productivity and similarly increase per capita income for our people, we need not impose a tax that is detrimental to progress in productivity health care and to consumers. Instead of VAT on fuel and power which caused so much suffering to our entrepreneurs and consumers as proposed by many sectors of our society – freedom from debt consumers, party list representatives, civic and religious sectors. This representation proposes the tax on text messaging, not as additional VAT but direct tax on SMS messaging. Data shows that there are approximately 300 million text messages sent through the mobile networks every day. A tax of fifty centavos per text message would generate around P 54.75 billion annually. This is almost double the expected annual P 29 billion from the VAT on petroleum products and six times the expected P 9 billion annually from the VAT on electricity. The revenues that could be realized from this can be earmarked for food productivity.

Further Mr. Speaker, I propose that the BIR vigorously collect VAT from the toll companies. Even if these toll companies are subject to VAT, they are not implementing it for the reason that the Toll Regulatory Board has not issued an order directing toll operators to include the VAT in their toll rates. If collected properly, the VAT from these toll companies could reach as much as P 90 million per month since they have an aggregate monthly toll revenue of P 900 million.

Mr. Speaker, my esteemed colleagues, this Representation has consistently and diligently worked for the country's efficient revenue collection, which is parallel to the recommendations of Moody's. I have spearheaded an inter-agency task force to project potential revenue per type of tax long before my son was appointed as Finance Secretary.

On matters concerning the term-sharing as Chairman of the Ways & Means Committee, there are a few things that have to be clarified.

Before our Christmas adjournment, a signature campaign was undertaken among members of the NPC requesting the Speaker to retain Cong. Lapus as Chairman. I was requested by other members of LAKAS to undertake similar signature campaign. I refused for the simple reason that it is not necessary because the **Speaker himself has forged a gentleman's agreement.**

A vigorous media campaign ensued, attacking this Representation vying for the Chairmanship of the Committee. The issues hurled against me were bordering along the lines of absurdity one of which is my being old, then conflict of interest since my son Gary is the Secretary of Finance. It was published that father and son tandem will not serve the country well.

Conflict of interest exists when one of us is known to be corrupt, if one of us has business interests to protect. The House economist, Congressmen Joey Salceda once said "that if this Representation will be appointed as chairman on the Ways & Means Committee, it would serve as a bonus because the son is the DOF Secretary". Conflict of interest can happen not only between family members but, as what happened under the Marcos regime, among cronies engaged in corrupt practices.

Congress is now proposing a Parliamentary form of government where the executive and legislative departments will merge hence eventually the Secretary of Finance will serve as the Chairman of Committee on Ways & Means.

Now, on the term sharing of the Chairmanship of the Ways and Means Committee, Mr. Speaker, I want things to be on proper perspective for the record of this august body. When I brought up this matter on the agreed term sharing with the Speaker, he was willing to give me the chairmanship **if and when my son Gary gives up his cabinet position as Secretary of Finance. "I said no way".**

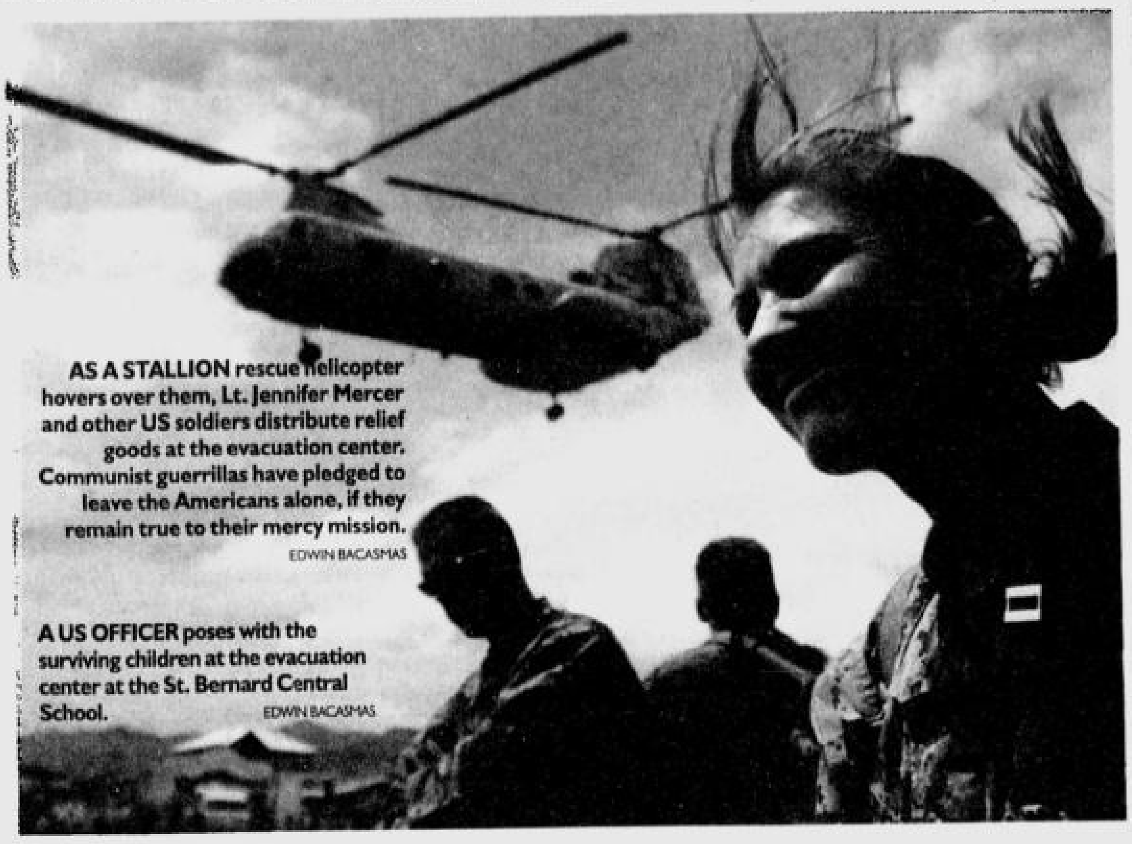
In the Business World article entitled "Outlook on RP mixed" (dated Feb. 10-11, 2006) states "In a report Moody's - already the most pessimistic among the three major credit raters – said the government must first show "more progress" in improving tax collections, pass the 2006 budget, and make assurances that current economic policies will continue before the "downward pressure" on the country's credit ratings is relieved".

In the Business World article of February 6, 2006 it was stated that the House Ways & Means Committee has shifted focus to tax compliance. This representation is of the belief that the Speaker and the House Committee on Ways & Means will now be implementing what I have long been advocating these past 3 terms. Tax collection efficiency must be made a priority to promote transparency in tax collection. Deleting the Secrecy and Confidentiality provision in our Tax Code will not just enhance Individual and Corporate Income Tax Collection it will address corruption problems as well. Input VAT and illegal deductions of exempt and zero rated sales on the Output V AT should also be scrutinized. The telecom industry players had experienced enormous gains yet they have huge amounts of questionable sales including outright declaration on vatable sales on cell cards. The over declaration of input vat and their reduced V AT liabilities is draining our government from the much-needed revenues. With respect to the VAT on the sales of these products, it needs to be immediately reconsidered so the consumers and the government are not placed in a disadvantaged position by the players.

With these premises Mr. Speaker, It is not necessary for me to be Chairman of the Committee on Ways & Means considering that this administration in cooperation with the lower House under your leadership has now decided to pursue tax collection efficiency instead of implement new tax that burden our consumers and entrepreneurs. To this end, let me be clear that I have no other interest but to protect the interest of our people mostly the poor consumers and the coffers of our government.

Thank you.

A US OFFICER poses with the surviving children at the evacuation center at the St. Bernard Central School. EDWIN BACASMAS



AS A STALLION rescue helicopter hovers over them, Lt. Jennifer Mercer and other US soldiers distribute relief goods at the evacuation center. Communist guerrillas have pledged to leave the Americans alone, if they remain true to their mercy mission. EDWIN BACASMAS

LANDSLIDE RESCUE MISSION

US soldiers land in Leyte

By Volt Contreras

ST. BERNARD, SOUTHERN LEYTE—Only three months ago, their image took a beating in street protests, public forums and congressional hearings after four of their men were accused of raping a Filipino woman at the Subic Freeport.

But controversy took a backseat yesterday as American soldiers taking part in the "Balikatan" exercises began arriving here to take part in rescue and relief efforts for victims of a landslide that buried an entire village.

The humanitarian contingent was mainly from the US 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit based in Okinawa, where the rape suspects were also stationed prior to being held under US Embassy custody to face trial.

Thunderous Hilo helicopters landing near an evacuation center announced the presence of the US military volunteers in this grief-stricken town.

At least 15 US soldiers were seen setting up a command post at the municipal hall grounds.

Another group of officers, including a Filipino-American chaplain, surveyed the disaster site.

2nd Lt. Edward Rushing said his initial assessment showed that up to 75 US servicemen could be deployed to assist local rescuers.

Up to 1,000 of the 6,000 US troops taking part in the Balikatan exercises can be tapped to work here, said Lt. Col. Don Biadog, a chaplain of the brigade.

"I also did rescue operations in the 9-11 attacks but this is something else," said Biadog, a Filipino-American originally from Bacolod City. "What I saw was mind-boggling and horrendous. I've never seen anything like this."

"I especially feel bad about the kids," said Biadog, referring to the more than 200 children feared buried in a local school.

Visibly more organized three days after the tragedy, the rescue teams are still on a "search-and-rescue mode," said Army Maj. Gen. Bonifacio Ramos, commander of the 8th Infantry Division.

They were nevertheless ready with more body bags and sacks of lime for new corpses to be found.

Amid the roar of bulldozers and choppers, Fr. Jose Labrador of the San Agustin Parish said Mass for the victims before noon.

Rebs guarantee safety of GIs on rescue mission

COMMUNIST GUERRILLAS SAID YESterday they won't attack American troops sent to help a landslide-hit province, but warned them not to stray into rebel zones or commit provocative acts.

The New People's Army guerrillas are active on Leyte island, where a massive landslide buried an entire farming village Friday, triggering fears that as many as 1,800 people may have been entombed alive.

In January, the guerrillas raided a police station in Leyte's Albuera town, seizing 31 M-16 rifles and pistols.

"The NPAs, if they would not be provoked, would not take steps against them, especially in this time of calamity," rebel spokesperson Gregorio "Roger" Rosal said.

But he said the rebels would react if the Americans took a direct role in any covert anti-insurgency operation and ventured into their strongholds under the cover of their humanitarian mission, Rosal said.

"Of course, we don't believe that they are there for purely humanitarian reasons," he said.

The guerrillas are on US and European lists of terrorist organizations. They suspended Norwegian-brokered talks with the government in 2004, saying Manila has refused to take steps to remove them from the terror blacklists.

They have escalated attacks in recent months, hoping to help bring down President Macapagal-Arroyo who survived an impeachment last year over allegations she rigged the 2004 election. The rebels have condemned her as a US lackey. *AP*

Buried school was home to math wizards

By Volt Contreras

ST. BERNARD, SOUTHERN LEYTE—IT WAS ONE OF THE TOWN'S best performing public schools, its pupils especially excelling in math competitions and academic exams.

That was Guinsaugon Elementary School before it became a virtual tomb last Friday.

Three days after a massive landslide, the fate of pupils full of promise despite their poverty, and of teachers dedicated to their calling despite their meager pay, remained uncertain.

Earlier, rescuers retrieved the remains of Gloria Navos, the teacher-coach of the Grade III pupils that emerged as champions in last year's Math Challenge. She also mentored this year's team that won 3rd place in the same competition.

Team of wizards

Along with more than 50 bodies taken to a barangay hall now serving as a makeshift morgue, Navos was positively identified through her wedding ring, District Superintendent Erlinda Diaz said in an interview yesterday.

Presumed trapped in one of the four GES school buildings are Navos' 2006 team of Grade I math wizards, Aira Mae Solis, Jeffrey Coquilla and Marvin Berdon, according to Diaz, citing records of the annual contest among the 27 public elementary schools in St. Bernard.

The Grade I pupils' victory was no fluke: Also this year, the GES teams from Grades II, III and V all placed 2nd in their respective categories, Diaz noted.

The school has long built a sterling reputation with its classroom aces.

Diaz said it ranked No. 2 in terms of the average scores posted by its pupils across all levels during the District Achievement Test last school year.

If other major indicators are considered, like the Division and National tests, GES was ranked 3.5 overall that same year, she said.

"It's never far behind when it comes to academics and teachers' performance," she said, noting that while Barangay Guinsaugon may be relatively poor compared to urban villages, she doesn't recall it having alarming cases of malnutrition or dropouts among its pupils.

'Idyllic spot'

The school official said GES pupils must have been "reviewing" for this year's division test scheduled on Feb. 24 covering the key subjects English, math, science and Makabayan—when disaster struck.

She believed the majority of the pupils finished with their morning recess and were inside their classrooms when portions of nearby Mt. Kan-Abag came tumbling down on the village at around 10:30 a.m. that fateful day.

Official figures placed the number of GES students at 246.

Diaz said the campus was already there, occupying its otherwise idyllic spot by a lush mountain, the day she first moved to St. Bernard in 1968.

This means the villagers had never considered the school—or their homes—to be in a dangerous location, she noted.

That was until Mt. Kan-Abag moved and bitterly snapped the winning streak of the school's fledgling math Olympians and budding topnotchers.

Faint sign of life in buried school

From page A1

cal corps, told reporters.

Asked if the sound indicated signs of life, Esguerra said: "Maybe, it's feasible."

His remarks clashed with an earlier statement by a Philippine National Red Cross official who said rescuers he had talked to told him that "indications will tell that those down there are all dead."

Romeo Orilla, information officer of the PNRC team at the disaster scene, said the school was located with the help of two dogs.

Orilla said he was quoting Raul del Mar, head of the Bureau of Fire Protection's search and rescue team based in Cebu.

Esguerra, for his part, said he was with another rescue team composed of seven members and that four of them, including himself, had heard the scratching sound between 2:30 and 3 p.m. while they were in the area where the schoolhouse was believed buried.

He said they were using instruments called Delsar, a life detection device consisting of sensitive microphone probes buried in the ground.

But Esguerra, a member the Mountaineering Federation of the Philippines, could not say how far down the scratching sound had come from or if a human being was responsible for it.

A Philippine Air Force officer, who asked not to be named and who was in a separate rescue operation, said the sound need not necessarily indicate human movement.

"It may just be running water or insects," said the officer.

Asked at a press briefing last night if there was still hope of finding survivors, provincial Gov. Rosette Lerias emphatically replied: "Of course, that's why we're still here."

She recalled that in similar disasters, like the landslides that hit Quezon province in 2004, four children were recovered alive after 10 days under the rubble.

"Why can't we do that in Southern Leyte, if God wills it so?" she said.

Under 30 meters of mud

In a phone interview, Hector Reyes, head of the Philippine K9 group involved in the search, clarified that no part of the school building had actually been reached by the rescuers.

Reyes said his team, with the help of three local guides and two dogs, only verified the specific mud-swamped area under which the school had stood.

Reyes said that as per readings made by special instruments brought to the site by another rescue team, the school lay beneath "25 to 30 meters" of earth.

Orilla said the school's location was verified at around 11 a.m. yesterday and that volunteers made several attempts to dig but these only resulted in "cave-ins."

The teams gave up at around 3 p.m.

'Please help us, ma'am'

The school's position was ascertained on the same day a local education official showed the INQUIRER "a text message" which she said she received last Saturday—or a day after the landslide—from a teacher trapped beneath the rubble.

Erlinda Diaz, district supervisor for the town's 27 elementary schools, said a message in Visayan that registered on her Sony Ericsson mobile phone read (in English): "Ma'am, we are still under the school. Please help us, ma'am. This is Edilio Coquilla. Please ma'am."

Coquilla is a volunteer teacher in the GES pre-school class, she said.

Diaz said she got the message "as forwarded" by the original recipient Delia Prieto, principal of the St. Bernard Central Elementary School. Prieto got the original message at around 1 p.m. Saturday and relayed it to Diaz at around 9 p.m. that same day, Diaz said.

Lerias said the thought that children could still be alive under their mud-covered school had kept rescue teams going.

But the search and rescue effort was turning into massive retrieval operation as rescue teams had been unable to find a single survivor. What they found instead were bodies in their muddy graves.

As of 4 p.m. yesterday, the disaster coordinating center at the municipal hall had reported 72 bodies recovered while 941 were still missing. The number of survivors stood at 415.

About 1,500 people from different barangays were being treated in evacuation centers.

Mass grave

Twenty-seven bodies that remained unidentified were buried in a mass grave at the public cemetery at 4:30 p.m. yesterday, after health officials raised fears of the spread of diseases if the bodies remained exposed.

"Imagine if we can find them alive, there are over 200 of them trapped inside the school," Lerias said. "I asked the people to please help us in praying that these students and teachers are all alive."

Tunnel planned

People involved in the rescue operation in the area where the semi-concrete school building was buried said they planned to build a tunnel to reach the victims below, believing there were high chances they could find people alive.

The search and rescue team, which included Filipino military groups, emergency response teams, mountaineers and miners, was assisted by American and Malaysian rescue experts.

Aside from Philippine Air Force helicopters, also involved were four Sea Knight helicopters from a US group belonging to the Okinawa-based 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit.

Rains blamed

Capt. Burrel Parmer, public affairs officer of Exercise Balikatan, said the Pentagon and the US Embassy were very much concerned about the situation.

As the government began its investigation into the incident, some survivors and residents of this town still believed it was the constant rains, coupled with a mild tremor, that had pushed the earth down onto their community.

The avalanche left an area of 8 square kilometers covered with mud as deep as 15 meters.

Some survivors told the INQUIRER that after about three weeks of rains, a mild earthquake shook the mountain and the landslide occurred.

Adrian Fuego, regional chief of the Office of Civil Defense, said he was informed yesterday that the national government, through the National Disaster Coordinating Council, would begin its probe of the landslide on orders of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Initially, he said, people at the regional Office of Civil Defense were working on the theory that "because of the rain, water saturated the place and loosened the earth."

He added that another theory was that the earthquake triggered the landslide.

In December 2003, the Mines and Geosciences Bureau warned that this town was among the "geohazard" areas in the country. This was shortly after a killer landslide occurred on Panaon Island, this province.

On the other hand, according to the US Geological Survey, "landslides can be initiated by rainfall, earthquakes, volcanic activity, changes in the groundwater, disturbance and change of the slope by man-made activities, or a combination of these factors."

Sensors from Taiwan

A life-saving machine from Taiwan was on the way to St. Bernard yesterday.

The equipment can detect movement under the ground and would be very crucial in locating those buried in the mud in Barangay Guinsaugon, officials said.

Rescuers have not been able to use heavy equipment to dig in the collapsed earth because the ground was still soft.

"If there is life underneath, they can be detected by these sensors," Defense Secretary and National Coordinating Council Chair Avelino Cruz Jr. said.

Rumsfeld's promise

More help was on the way to Barangay Guinsaugon.

Some 40 seasoned miners from the Philippine Mining Safety and Environment Association left Manila yesterday with their ropes and drilling equipment. They had been involved in previous rescue operations in the country.

Cruz said US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld had promised help.

The Leyte landslide again raised the perennial question of how Divine Providence could allow such a tragedy, more so in a province repeatedly battered by disasters.

Maasin Bishop Precioso Cantillas said: "Even in these most painful times, we believe that God continues to love all of us, especially those who are severely affected."

"While such faith is tested by this disaster, we humbly ask the God of mercy and love to sustain us in our faith and to remain constant in our hope for a better life and even everlasting peace." *With reports from Luige A. del Puerto and Christian V. Esguerra*

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METRO

Editor Ester G. Dipasupil

Eusebio open to drug probe

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THE PASIG CITY GOVERNMENT YESTERDAY promised to cooperate with various national government agencies that have been tasked to look into allegations that city officials were involved in the "one-stop shop shabu restaurants" discovered on Feb. 10.

"They can always come in. We are willing to cooperate," City Legal Officer Carlos Abesamis, speaking in behalf of Mayor Vicente Eusebio, told the INQUIRER.

Operatives of the Anti-Illegal Drugs Special Operations Task Force raided the shabu dens, where users can rent paraphernalia and buy illegal drugs, inside a compound of shanties in Sitio Mapayapa in Barangay Sto. Tomas the other week.

Police said the drug compound, just half a kilometer away from the City Hall and the Eastern Police District (EPD), could have been operating for more than a year.

Rival links mayor to drug dens

Eusebio further drew flak when he demolished the structures, which were considered as evidence, five days after the raid, without coordinating with the national police. His political rival, Rep. Robert Jaworski Jr., the other day even linked Eusebio to the illegal operations, claiming that a certain "Pacman" was collecting money from the shabu dens for the mayor.

Abesamis, quoting Eusebio, dismissed the allegation as plain "political posturing."

"He (Jaworski) just wants to destroy the reputation of the Eusebio family," he added.

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzales earlier ordered the National Bureau of Investigation to look into the allegations against Pasig officials. The Department of Interior and Local Government will also be conducting a probe into the matter.

"We are open to the investigation. We have the same objective of eradicating drug addiction in the city," Abesamis added.

Police officials under suspicion

EPD director Chief Supt. Oscar Valenzuela has taken a two-week vacation leave while Pasig City Police chief Senior Supt. Raul Medina has been relieved of his post following the discovery of the shabu dens.

Twenty-five other policemen from the district and the city police were relieved and yesterday left for the Philippine National Police Facility in Subic for retraining.

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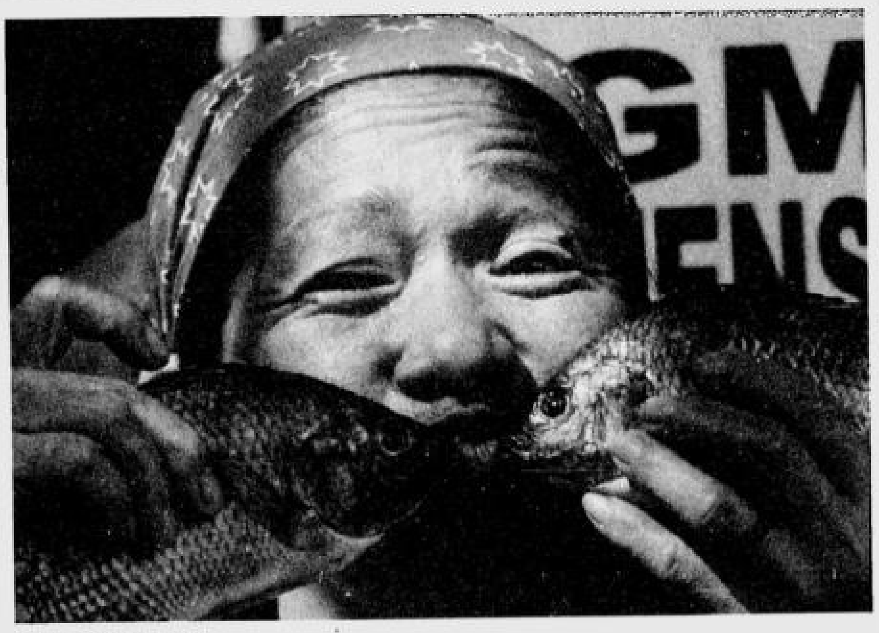

FISHPALOOZA
Members of the militant Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya group stage their own version of the Lovapalooza kissing festival, locking lips with their scaly "tilapia" partners. The unusual public display of affection last Friday was meant to highlight the group's disapproval of the appointment of former Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes as environment secretary. JOAN BONDOC

Special camp for special kids

By DJ Yap

SOME OF THEM WERE AUTISTIC, OTHERS were deaf, while a few were wheelchair-bound, but they danced, frolicked and played like there was no tomorrow, for at Camp Pag-ibig, children will be children.

A special kind of love once again flowed at Camp Pag-ibig, as it celebrated 30 years of giving cheer and hope to hundreds of differently-abled youngsters.

Some 3,000 special kids from Metro Manila and neighboring provinces converged yesterday at the Balara Filter Plant in Diliman, Quezon City, accompanied by their parents and camp volunteers. They played games, swam in the pool, danced, and simply had fun.

Yearly tradition dating back to 70s

Other activities lined up at Camp Pag-ibig, a yearly tradition in the city that dates back to the mid-1970s, included skills survival training, cooking demonstration and art appreciation lessons.

Quezon City Mayor Feliciano Belmonte Jr. served as camp host and honorary chair, a role he has assumed since 2001.

"Camp Pag-ibig is designed to provide children with disabilities with opportunities to enhance their socialization skill, paving the way for full integration and participation in the community," organizers said.

Like any camp, tents were set up, with clowns and mascots performing during a fun-filled program. A forum was also held, in which parents talked about their concerns for their children's future.

The activities were planned and designed to make the children remember the two-day festivity for years to come, according to camp director Jorge Banal Sr., Senate Jaycees president.

Biggest gathering ever

This year's camp was the biggest yet, with some of the delegates coming from special schools in Regions 3 and 4, said co-camp director Erlinda Lolarga.

Highlighting this year's Camp Pag-ibig was the blessing and unveiling of a marker describing the camp's history for the past 30 years, followed by a thanksgiving Mass.

Camp Pag-ibig was started in 1976 by the Philippine Association for the Retarded Inc. as the highlight of National Retarded Children Week, as provided for in Presidential Proclamation No. 1385.

METROBRIEFS

Jogging protest

CLAD in jogging pants, t-shirts and shorts, more than 50 members of a multisectoral group led by Bayan Muna Rep. Joel Virador gathered at the Rizal Park early yesterday morning and jogged toward the United States Embassy in Roxas Boulevard to stage a protest against the Balikatan exercises in Jolo, Sulu. "What the Filipino people need is regular exercise that is good for the health and not the Balikatan exercises that give rise to rights abuses and the destruction of the local people's daily lives," Virador said. A small police force guarding the US Embassy gates was taken by surprise by the joggers composed mostly of women and children from Bayan Muna, Solidarity Action Network of Mindanao, Bagong Alyansang Makabayan, Kilusang Mayo Uno, Moro-Christian People's Alliance and the Suara Bangsamoro party.

Margaux C. Ortiz

Still waiting for justice

NEARLY a year after his death, the family of assassinated Pasig City Rep. Henry Lanot is still in the dark about who killed him and why. "We are still waiting for the results of the investigation," Lanot's eldest son, Ken, told the INQUIRER yesterday. His father, whose electoral protest against Pasig City Mayor Vicente Eusebio is still pending in the Supreme Court, was shot in the head while eating lunch inside a restaurant in Pasig City on April 13 last year. Lanot's supporters had claimed the assassination was politically motivated but Eusebio, who won over Lanot during the hotly contested mayoral elections two years ago, denied the allegations.

Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

Car owner identified

INVESTIGATORS have identified the owner of a car that figured in the killing of a Laguna information officer in Makati on Saturday. PO3 Noel Pardinas, case investigator from the Makati Police Department Homicide Unit, said yesterday that follow-up operations have led to the identification of the owner of a black sedan (UHD 416), identified by a witness as the car driven by the man who shot to death Jensen Cristobal, a Sta. Rosa, Laguna public information officer. But while the car owner was automatically considered a suspect in the slay, Pardinas withheld the name, pending further validation. "We are not sure yet whether he still owns the car, because he may have sold it but failed to transfer registration," said the investigator.

Tarra V. Quismundo

Fake products seized

ABOUT P2 million worth of fake Louis Vuitton and Gucci products were seized during recent raids conducted by the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) on seven stores in Binondo and Tondo, Manila. NBI Intellectual Property Rights Division chief Jose Justo Yap said the store owners now face unfair competition charges. The raids conducted on Feb. 9 yielded 5,323 pieces of counterfeit Louis Vuitton bags and wallets, and 2,700 fake Gucci items.

Margaux C. Ortiz

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Recently we've received a flood of emails from potential partners all inquiring about new opportunities in the BPO industry. Here are some of their questions..

Q: We are a bag manufacturing company in Bulacan, and export our products to the U.S.A, Australia, Europe, Canada. We heard about your new set up for call centers and our company is interested to know more about it since we would like to have this incorporated in our system—Edith, thru email

A: Hi Edith, opening a contact center to offer your customers sales support and to handle orders directly is an excellent idea. Not only do you facilitate existing customer transactions but you also expand your potential to reach new customers. With PLDT OnCall, you can set-up a contact center to make direct call-outs to sales leads in the US; you can watch your customer base grow with each passing day. And the best thing is you can keep adding on extra capacity to your contact center with PLDT OnCall—so much easier and without expensive upgrade costs

Q: I'd like to inquire about the package and service that your company offers to all new established call center. We have 20 existing contact center licenses and we need additional licenses for our expansion. It will be located in Cubao and we need it as soon as possible. – thru email from A.S.

A: Hi A.S. PLDT OnCall can definitely accommodate your expansion requirement You don't need additional space.anymore to house your equipment and you don't need to buy the equipment because we will provide, manage and host the contact center platform for you Your capex will be greatly reduced. PLDT OnCall personnel will contact you soon to further scope your operations and recommend the most effective set-up for you.

THE PEOPLE

Rage with a heart; reality bites Army brats

From page A1

And that was when the haze was lifted. Perhaps nothing in human history can jolt the conscience more than spilled human blood. We rage if blood is spilled in a cold-blooded murder. We rage even more if innocent blood is spilled. From Aug. 21 we knew that life wouldn't be the same again. We now raged, but still had to find the "coeur," or heart in French, to go with it.

And so the rage began. I wasn't an ideologue but appreciated some of the positions taken by the Left. Marxism-Leninism I found unattractive, just like many in my generation. Perhaps it was the fact that the communist revolution has spilled human blood like what the fascists and Marcos did.

Snap election

In 1985, Marcos called for his snap election. I was in Korea on a student's exchange. I was then a freshman at UP. At UP, we were, and still are, free to choose our ideologies and personal beliefs.

1984 and 1985 turned out to be an eye-opener. The opposition won 1/3 of seats in parliament. That they won this much despite widespread electoral fraud attested to the rage that the people felt. The communists, in their inflexible ideology, failed to realize that the people wanted the largely peaceful and nonviolent way to express the rage. We were then just one year short of being able to vote. But we knew that it was just a matter of time.

The 1986 campaign was marked by violence, intimidation, rage and prayer. I remember that someone was collecting signatures for Cory Aquino's candidacy at Palma Hall. I did not sign. In principle, I supported the left's call for boycott.

Folly of boycott

But soon enough I realized the folly of boycott and decided to support the vote not in a partisan way but to defend the ballot. I told my Dad, now that you have convinced me to cast my first ballot, I have no choice but to defend it. It was too valuable.

Thus on Feb. 7, 1986, I lost my political virginity.

In the poll watch, I carried weapons for self-defense, but the voters' high regard for the nonviolent path impressed me that I eventually dispensed with weapons.

The votes were counted and I had no sleep for days. I went to a Mass celebrated by Jaime Cardinal Sin at Baclaran Church. This was at the height of the poll count.

Crunch time

What I clearly remember is a chat with a grandmother after the Mass. I confessed to her that I feared what could happen. She told me, "never to fear or give in. If you give in, we lose everything."

It was beginning to sound like a Greek Tragedy. We have old women give advice and the young seem about to die. When fraud reared its ugly head and was consummated, the Catholic bishops drew the moral line. On which side should I be? It was crunch time.

I came from ROTC training the day Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile and Gen. Fidel Ramos defected. My father told me of the news after I had dismissed my marksmanship platoon.

One of the cadets phoned me that they were at the barricades in front of Crame. A friend called me that the situation was serious. I replied that we were now in a revolutionary situation. This was no longer funny.

The week before, when Marcos' parliament declared him as the winner, my whole gang shouted "*rebolusyon*." For the first time, I saw fear in my father's eyes. He was not afraid that Marcos' days were over but that many of the members of my generation would die.

Young as we were, we had only romantic notions of "revolution." No doubt the leftist propaganda in UP contributed to our romanticism. Being the good soldier he was, my dad did not say any word on what we said. I told him that some of the cadets were in Crame and that I, as their commanding officer, have to be there.

Once more my father did not say a word but gave the salute. I put on a blue jacket with a flak vest underneath.

Army brats

So I had to look for the members of my platoon. I did find them inside Crame with orders to shoot back. These cadets were all army brats, sons of Army officers who had defected to the Enrile-Ramos camp. And the long nights began. The most fearful time was when some helicopter gunships landed. Probably this was it. But it was Gen. Antonio Sotelo's men, who defected to the rebel side.

With the situation relaxed, one of the army brats said that we could take a shower at his dad's quarters at Crame, "for it would be the last time." A priest had given us viaticum the night before. In the morning, I found my Dad looking for me, who ordered the UP cadet squad to "go home."

Dad's courage

He brought me to General Ramos' office, where we stayed for the day. I then knew how much my father loved me, for it did take courage to put himself in line of possible fire. He was a bemedalled combat veteran but going after me still required a lot of courage.

My recollection is now hazy, for I was dead tired, very hungry and wasn't able to take that "last shower." There was another group of other army brats, armed with assault weapons. The situation was still dangerous. I had been trained as a marksman in ROTC and had learned to dissociate my emotion from my weapon.

This is a skill I still have and has served me well in many of life's trials since. After watching the movie "Taps" 20 years later, I now realize that youth can do the unthinkable. Perhaps this is why my dad was fearful. He was in charge of ROTC training in Metro Manila colleges and knew cadet psychology very well.

I distinctly remember General Ramos and Minister Enrile saying prayers before a statue of the Fatima Virgin. I had never seen politicians do this. I then moved to a side room and while watching the TV, I saw Marcos cut from the air. The end was at hand for Marcos and for his pulling the plug off Voltes V, this was revenge on a cold plate!

My Edsa experience was almost totally confined inside an army camp. Unlike my friends and classmates from UP who scaled a TV tower under fire, or who stopped the tanks or wept under tear gas, I just had to keep the cadets in good spirits and to hold their fire.

We were courageous as young people were expected to be. And we raged. It is by God's providence that this rage was not expressed in the violent way, but in a most laudable nonviolent one.

'Butz, you better leave now'

By **Rozel Alex M. Santos**

"BUTZ, YOU BETTER leave the place now," Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile told Agapito Aquino, leader of the August Twenty One Movement, or Atom. "It is no longer safe for you to be around."

Aquino was having an impromptu meeting with Enrile at the Ministry of National Defense in Camp Aguinaldo. I was then an Atom officer. I had gone to Camp Aguinaldo to check out the radio report about the breakaway when I chanced upon Aquino and joined him.

Enrile had requested for the meeting after Aquino telephoned him and offered help. But Enrile abruptly stopped the meeting after an officer showed up with news of an imminent attack. Enrile turned to go to a group of uniformed and stern-looking military officers.

Bravado

But Aquino, in his usual bravado, declared, "Mr. Minister, we are not leaving you behind. The people together with the Atom members are in Cubao nearby prepared to come to join you here in Camp Aguinaldo."

Sternly, Enrile exhorted us, almost in command, "Please, leave the place now. You heard what he just reported to me. The situation is dangerous." The officer had reported in a frantic tone that Marcos' forces were "coming to attack us and bomb the place, sir."

I could feel my hair was all up and I started to feel a big lump in my throat that almost choked me! "Oh Lord! What is this!" I said to myself. I was in terror!

Enrile gave quick instructions to the officers, then proceeded to a news conference of local and foreign reporters.

I urged Aquino to leave the place pronto.

I will never forget how, quite spontaneously, our dialogue went. "Butz, are our Atom companions really waiting in Cubao? With that distinctly Aquino grin, he answered almost in a whisper as he bent over, "*ano ka ba, palabas lang natin yon* (what are you, it's all for show), but we can call them anytime."

We went back to Cubao and at a telephone booth Aquino started making phone calls, including one to Radio Veritas, where he urged people to gather at Edsa and protect the rebels.

"SHOWTIME" for Butz Aquino.

Emboldened by Johnny Walker

By **Reli L. German**

IN THE EARLY EVENING OF Feb. 22, 1986, I was at a small birthday party with members of the August Twenty-One Movement (Atom) when news of the rebellion by Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile and Gen. Fidel Ramos broke out.

Because there was no phone around to confirm the report, we rushed to the Atom headquarters on Pasay Road to call an emergency meeting of the Atom executive committee, including Agapito (Butz) Aquino.

I helped Butz set up Atom after the 1983 assassination of Benigno Aquino, his brother.

Cecilia Muñoz-Palma, Diokno

Butz then called up Justice Cecilia Muñoz-Palma and Sen. Jose Diokno who said that Atom should weigh the situation carefully before making any decision.

Shortly after, probably emboldened by the spirit of Johnny Walker (or was it Swing?), Butz decided to go to the scene of the ongoing event.

At around 11 p.m., we heard Butz on the radio declaring Atom's support for the Enrile-Ramos group and asking all anti-Marcos people to convene at Cindys' fast food alongside Isetann department store on Aurora Boulevard in Cubao.

We began to march on Edsa towards Crame and Aguinaldo just after midnight. We were to camp out in that vicinity for the next three days, not knowing what was in store for us.

On Feb. 23, I headed an Atom group of five that was stationed on Bonnie Serrano Avenue on the side of Camp Crame. Late that night, we got reports that soldiers loyal to Marcos would attack the camps on board tanks and armored vehicles. So we placed garbage cans, rocks, and other stuff to form a barricade on Serrano Avenue.

Solitary rope

Residents on streets perpendicular to Serrano had already made their own barricades. What was unique was the one on 4th Avenue.

There was nothing on the entrance to the road, save for a solitary rope tied between the Meralco post and a traffic sign on the opposite end.

By early morning, no tanks, no armored vehicles came. I told my group that enemy scouts must have been puzzled (as we were) or intimidated by the rope that was obviously meant to stop their forces from trying to retake the camps.

The entire Atom group was right at the intersection of Edsa and Bonnie Serrano when the news broke out on the morning of Feb. 25 that the Marcoses had fled the country. All of us yelled our lungs out and unabashedly cried in extreme jubilation. The country was finally free.

The demonstration that never was

By **Albert del Rosario**

(The writer is now Philippine ambassador to the United States.)

IN THE DAYS LEADING UP to the snap elections in February 1986, it became increasingly clear that Filipinos were determined to reclaim their democracy through the ballot.

The whole world was watching the Philippines then. The Americans joined others in sending an election monitoring mission. Sen. Richard Lugar led the American mission, which included such American political figures as Sen. John Kerry, Sen. Thad Cochran, Congressman Jerry Lewis and Congressman John Murtha.

US mission

Despite the findings of the American mission, President Ronald Reagan stated publicly his belief that there had been cheating on both sides during the snap elections. This caused a wave of indignation among Filipinos.

In reaction, Jimmy Ongpin, democracy activist and business leader, issued a call for Filipinos like myself, Tong Payumo, Tony Cumagun, and Ben Santos, who had graduated from US schools, to organize a rally.

We were to march to the US Embassy to submit a manifesto protesting Reagan's statement to Ambassador Steve Bosworth. With shirt and tie as required attire, I was designated to personally present our manifesto to the American ambassador in his office.

On Friday, Feb. 21, 1989, Jimmy asked me to advise the Americans of this plan as Steve Bosworth and I were close friends. When I told him we would be coming, Steve, ever the gentleman, asked me what soft drinks we would like to have served since we would be marching in the heat of the sun.

Protecting military

The demonstration was organized to include 150 US graduates and had been scheduled for Monday, Feb. 24. However, we were overtaken by events. What would forever be memorialized as the First Edsa Filipino People Power Revolution burst into the open on Saturday, Feb. 22, 1986.

Jimmy Ongpin, Bert Romulo, Tong Payumo, Tony Cumagun, Ben Santos and I were among the first small groups of civilians that rushed into Camp Aguinaldo that memorable Saturday evening.

Along with our families who immediately followed and kept vigil outside of the camps through the succeeding days, we went there to protect those in the military who had broken with Marcos. We did not know it then, but we would become part of one of the great episodes in Philippine history, even though the rally we ourselves had planned never took place!

THE MILITARY

'I chose to be there'

From page A1

Camp Aguinaldo to bravely face up to the tanks sent by President Marcos' generals.

Early Sunday morning (Feb. 23) found me and my fellow officers assigned at the RSBS huddled in a meeting in Greenhills, San Juan, where we decided that enough was enough and that Marcos had to go.

I and Col. Reynaldo Reyes, Col. Guillermo Cunanan and Lt. Col. Efren Abu decided to throw our lot with the Filipino people and the vastly outnumbered rebel soldiers inside Crame and Aguinaldo for we can no longer stomach the excesses of the government.

Armed with my trusty .30-caliber US carbine, I and Colonels Reyes and Abu went inside Camp Aguinaldo before noon of Feb. 23, but not before entrusting our families to Colonel Cunanan, who was already retired at the time. We trusted Colonel Cunanan to look after the welfare of our families and to tell our tales if anything untoward happened to us.

Surprised

Inside Aguinaldo, I met acquaintances who were surprised but happy to see me. The air inside was electric because of information that artilleries and tank units, with their full complement of Marines, were being arrayed against us from all directions.

We were also told that an aerial bombardment was imminent, prompting General Ramos, who was at Camp Crame, to ask Minister Enrile to transfer from Aguinaldo to Crame.

Goose bumps

I was with Minister Enrile when we left Aguinaldo to go to Camp Crame on foot via Capinpin Avenue. I had goose bumps when at the gates of the two camps we were mobbed by people whose numbers filled Edsa and adjacent roads as far as the eye can see.

I thought then that, truly, the Armed Forces of the Philippines has metamorphosed into the Armed Forces of the People.

With Gen. Fabian Ver ratcheting up the pressure on us holed up inside Crame with tanks having their big-bore guns trained on us right from the golf course inside Aguinaldo, General Ramos asked us to choose our battle posts.

I decided to join the ground forces of Col. Red Kapunan and, doing a foot soldier's job, proceeded to help guard the rear of Camp Crame where the vehicles of Minister Enrile and General Ramos were located. We knew the tactical importance of those vehicles in case the leaders of the rebel forces had to transfer their base of resistance.

We who were doing rear position defense at Crame already had our fingers on the triggers of our rifles—cocked and ready to go—when we heard what to civilians would have been the frightening heavy drones of attack helicopters.

The choppers reconnoitered one time, surely doing reconnaissance of Crame's defenses, and I told myself that the second time they get over us all hell would break loose.

As it turned out, the helicopters were being "signed, sealed and delivered" by Col. Antonio Sotelo, who then joined over into our side.

Foot soldier

The rest is history. But as I look back at those four glorious days when the Filipino people stood side by side with THEIR Armed Forces, I know that I had made a decision that could live up to the high standards I have set for myself.

I was a veritable foot soldier in 1986 during Edsa People Power I despite my rank, but it was a duty to God, country and family which I could not turn my back to. I didn't have to be there, but I chose to be there.

My conviction which will never change is that whether as a rifleman or as a Chief of Staff of the AFP, which I was during Edsa Dos in 2001, a man's contribution to a common cause, no matter how humble, is immeasurable.

I am proud to say to my children and my children's children that in 1986, when the Filipino bucked tall odds to effect change, I was there in Edsa fighting for what I believe was right.

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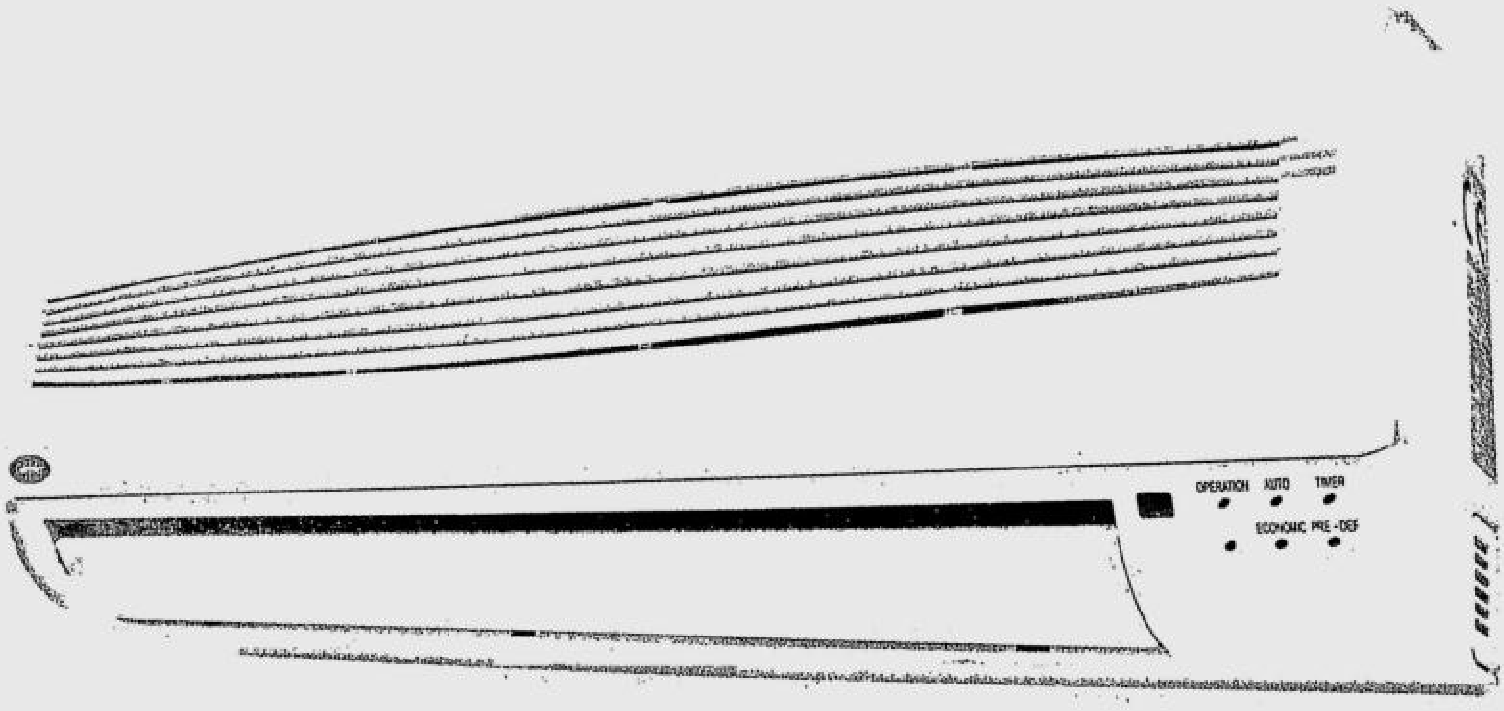

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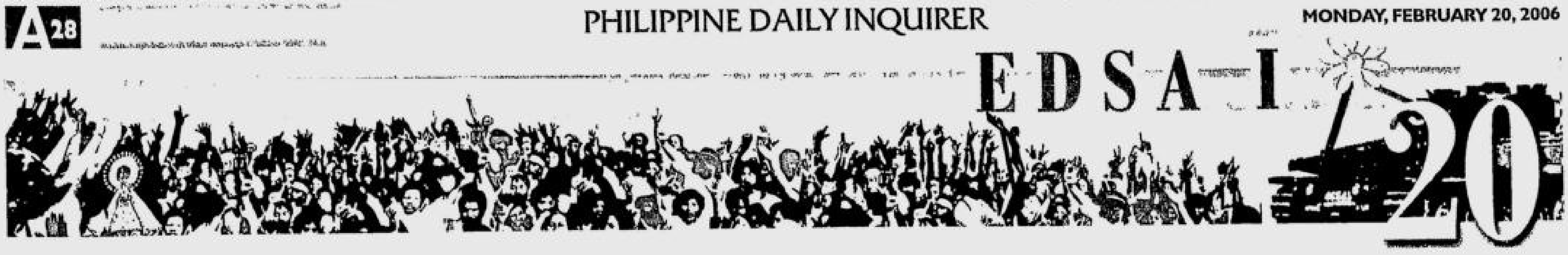

THE MILITARY

Abadia: Superiors' orders fell on deaf ears

By Fe Zamora

ALTHOUGH PRESIDENT FERDINAND MARCOS HAD ANnounced he would not attack the rebels, loyal generals, allegedly prodded by the First Lady, continued to issue orders to decimate the rebels, a former Armed Forces chief said.

But the orders fell on deaf ears as the ground commanders had already lost their will to fight, said Gen. Lisandro Abadia, who was then Army chief of operations.

According to him, even Imelda Marcos tried to influence the Army to proceed with the counter-attack.

"I told her it was not possible. There were just too many people, (there would be) too many casualties," Abadia said.

Abadia said he was in Cebu when the revolution began. He quickly flew back to Manila the next day.

Counter-attack

At Fort Bonifacio, Abadia recalled a flurry of plannings for a counter-attack, including sending Marines.

Headed by Brig. Gen. Artemio Tadiar, the troops left Fort Bonifacio at 2 p.m. By his reckoning, Abadia said the troops would reach Camp Aguinaldo at 4 p.m.

But at 4 p.m., the troops were still at Ortigas and Edsa.

Sea of humanity

"I told General Ramas that something was wrong. The columns were not moving," he said.

On a helicopter flight, he saw Edsa was crammed with people. Abadia landed at a lot near the Ortigas-Edsa corner, where the troops were stuck.

"When we landed, the people swarmed around us," he said. There, Abadia met with Tadiar.

"I told him, Sir, you stopped. And he said, 'yes, Boy *(Abadia's nickname)*, there are just too many people'."

Tadiar not willing

"I saw that General Tadiar was not willing anymore," Abadia said.

But two battalions from Tadiar's contingent managed to inch slowly to Camp Aguinaldo via the White Plains road, said retired Brig Gen. Braulio Balbas.

When no orders came for them to move to Crame, Balbas said he ordered the troops back to Fort Bonifacio.

A new directive to return to Camp Aguinaldo came at dawn on Monday, Feb. 24, Balbas continued.

Teargas

To avoid the Edsa crowd, the Marines took the Libis route. At Santolan, they were blocked by a huge crowd that included nuns, priests and students. Using teargas, the Marines briefly dispersed the crowd.

By 7:30 a.m., Balbas said "the machine guns and the mortars were already in place."

Balbas said he received the order at 9 a.m. It came from Gen. Josephus Ramas, the Army chief.

"He said, Balbas, I want you to fire your cannons and report for compliance. I did not say 'yes,' but I told him I was still positioning my cannons, my mortars and the troops," Balbas said.

Balbas said Ramas called again 15 minutes later. But he kept on stalling.

Balbas said he tried to talk to Tadiar, but he had gone back to Malacañang.

"I told him I could not fire at Crame because of the crowd. I recommended to him that we move back to Fort Bonifacio and he acceded," Balbas said.

But the generals at the Army HQ refused to give up, according to Abadia.

Disobey orders

"We were planning the massive bombardment of Crame, and we were winking at each other," he said. "We understood that we were not going to do it."

In the middle of their planning, Imelda Marcos called.

"She wanted to know how soon we could launch the counter-attack," Abadia said. He replied that it was no longer possible.

Scout Ranger begs, cajoles to get his commander out of harm's way

By Col. Romeo Y. Lim *(retired)*

ON SUNDAY, FEB. 23, 1986, AS CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE Scout Rangers, I was summoned to report to the Philippine Army headquarters. I was very surprised when I entered the conference. I was the only colonel in the meeting of generals.

The consensus was for me to bring one company of Scout Rangers to Edsa and open fire to disperse the crowd. My conscience rebelled against these instructions and I decided to stall.

I said I would send my intelligence officer to assist the ground troops. Then I went back to my office and began to look for Brig. Gen. Felix Brawner II, my commander.

I called the family of General Brawner. I also called Lt. Col. Dunda Matabalao, commander of the Scout Ranger Training Center.

My junior officers were already very restless and itching to go to Edsa to join the anti-Marcos forces. I told them that I needed time to extract General Brawner. I wanted him out of harm's way. I also did not want him to pressure the troops to follow unconscionable orders.

My heart sank when I saw General Brawner on television at the Palace, standing behind the President.

I immediately called up Malacañang and asked to talk to General Ver. I told him that the Scout Rangers were hesitant to follow orders unless they came from General Brawner.

I begged, pleaded and cajoled General Ver to allow General Brawner to proceed to Fort Bonifacio to join the troops, praying that my bluff would work.

Ver calls bluff

Ver called my bluff. General Brawner himself rang me to say he was proceeding to the Scout Rangers headquarters.

I contacted Mrs. Brawner and close relatives and Colonel Matabalao and asked them to proceed to headquarters.

When the general arrived, I suggested that it would be better if he instructed the troops to "freeze," that is, not to move in favor of any side.

In an indignant tone, he said this would be an act of cowardice. I led him to his room, where he saw his wife, relatives and Colonel Matabalao. Except for the colonel, every one started crying. All of them asked him to defect.

Meanwhile, I told the officers that if General Brawner asked who was still willing to fight for President Marcos no one should raise their hand. Sure enough, the general called for a command conference and asked the question. No one raised a hand.

Visibly surprised at the outcome, the general announced he would not go back to Malacañang.

THE PALACE

Where's makeup artist?

From page A1

A mainstay of the popular late '60s, early '70s dzHP news team, Rivera said he had been called to the Palace at around 6 p.m. on that lazy Sunday—Feb. 23, 1986—and had taken with him dispatches from Washington to brief the President.

"Why am I going on the air again?" Marcos asked Rivera moments after he was ushered into the President's private room.

Bongbong opposes

Rivera had just started explaining when Bongbong, wearing jungle fatigues, butted in, "No! Don't go on the air!"

A veteran broadcast journalist and boxing aficionado who had managed such ring greats as World Bantamweight Champion Luisito Espinosa, Rivera continued his briefing. It was essentially that US President Ronald Reagan had threatened to withdraw support if Marcos ordered an assault on the rebel-held camps Aguinaldo and Crame in Quezon City.

"Bongbong was vociferously objecting to the TV appearance of the President while I was trying to explain to him the need for that, based on the wire stories and the radio reports that I had heard," Rivera recounted.

As Bongbong continued his tirade, Marcos turned to his valet and said in the Ilocano dialect: "Can you get the makeup artist? There is something shiny in my forehead."

"I took that as a cue that he was disapproving Bongbong. He was going on the air!" said Rivera.

Rivera went to get the technicians and outside the room came face to face with Bongbong, this time carrying a Galil—the Israeli assault weapon.

Don't interfere

"He came to me, stopped me short and said, '*Nakialam ka na naman! Sinabi ko na sa iyo na huwag kang makialam*' (You interferred again. I already told you not to meddle)."

"I tried to explain to him. I was pleading. '*Hindi po. Hindi ho ako nakikialam. Napag-uutusan po lang tayo*' (No, sir. I am not meddling, sir. We are just following orders.)"

"No, no, no, no," said Bongbong, then a mop-haired, 28-year-old Army lieutenant.

"All sorts of invectives came out of him," said Rivera. "What I was concerned most was not the viciousness of his tirade, but more on the prospects of being killed. For what?"

After what seemed like eternity, Bongbong mercifully turned around and left him.

"I think that singular incident tells us just who was the real author of what the world hailed as a bloodless revolution," said Rivera. "Paradoxically, Bongbong helped in the peaceful resolution of the conflict by not pulling the trigger on that fateful night with me."

The 67-year-old Rivera said he decided to come out with his story for the first time to let everyone know that the People Power revolution wasn't all about the movers and shakers. It was also about bit players whose roles were no less significant.

It was beautiful

"It was beautiful. Nothing happened after the President went on the air, counseling his soldiers not to move at all, to keep the status quo for the sake of the country," said Rivera.

It wasn't like that at all on the first day of the breakaway on Saturday, Feb. 22, 1986, a day filled with tension and uncertainty.

Rivera said the pall of gloom seemed to have descended upon the Palace a week earlier—when Marcos made a surprise announcement that he had accepted the resignation of Gen. Fabian Ver as Armed Forces chief—a move that stunned Ver.

Marcos had designated Ramos as head of the military. But to Ramos' chagrin, Marcos agreed to extend, on Ver's request, the turnover of command to allow Ver to express his gratitude to the troops in the field.

Curious, Rivera had called Ver to ask why he had resigned. Ver told him, no he had not, but that he had turned in a pro-forma resignation, as a matter of courtesy, following the snap election.

And Rivera had wondered if there would have been any revolution at all had Ramos immediately taken command of the Armed Forces. He recalled that Ramos himself had called Malacañang several times asking when this would happen.

But the day the revolution broke out, there was Ver at the Palace with his son, Irwin, the chief of the Presidential Guards who was unusually clad in full battle uniform, anxiously pacing about.

Special envoy

The two arrived at the Study Room shortly after Marcos had received US President Ronald Reagan's special envoy, Philip Habib, who had called to report on his observations on the conduct of the snap elections. The meeting, which began at 10 a.m., lasted three hours.

Immediately after Habib left, Rivera went to do his usual task—to ask the President what he would like the Malacañang press corps to know about the meeting.

But Ver beat Rivera to the President. The two repaired to a private room and later Ver called Irwin to join them.

When the three emerged 70 minutes later, Marcos told Rivera to prepare a press release simply reporting that his meeting with Habib centered on how he had won the snap election "fair and square."

ARCHEMEDES FERRER/CHIEF, MALACAÑANG PHOTO

RIVERA WAS *THAT* close to Marcos. He sets up Marcos for a TV appearance in the David Brinkley show in November, 1985.

Rivera went to the press office, unaware that Irwin had reported to the President how he had uncovered a plot by Enrile to mount a coup d'etat on Sunday and that a crackdown against the suspected putschists had begun.

Hush-hush

"I thought something was amiss. There was a hush-hush atmosphere," said Rivera.

At 3 p.m., he went to the Manila Hotel, where the foreign press types hang out, to try and find out what was going on. He ran into Time photographer Robin Moyers, who told him, "How come your guys are deserting ship now? We're going to Enrile's office. Something's going to be announced."

Close on Moyer's heels came Time correspondent Sandra Burton, who told Rivera, "I can't talk now. I'm rushing. I'll see you later."

Rivera strode to the coffee bar and saw JV Cruz, the Philippine ambassador to the Court of Saint James. Rivera told him everybody seemed to be heading for Camp Aguinaldo.

"Is that true?" Cruz said.

"If I were you, I'd go back to your post," Rivera said.

Cruz took one big gulp of his scotch, called his driver and proceeded to the airport. "The next thing I knew, he was back in London," said Rivera.

"It was then about 4 p.m. I tried reaching the President, trying to figure out how I could make a sense of it all. I tried to call in the next several hours but couldn't get through. I thought that was unusual. There had never been an instance when my calls to the President had been rejected," said Rivera.

After Enrile announced the breakaway at around 6 p.m. "All hell broke loose," said Rivera.

Dialysis

Shortly after 8 p.m. Col. Arturo Aruiza, the President's senior military aide, came on the phone and told Rivera that the President was on the line but that he had to be very brief. Rivera summed up what he had learned so far.

Rivera later learned from Aruiza the reason why Marcos was unavailable during those turbulent hours.

"He was being given his usual dialysis, which I understood rendered him incommunicado for at least four hours," Rivera said, revealing for the first time Marcos' condition at that time.

Marcos' kidney problems, the subject of so much speculation, had been a closely guarded secret since 1979.

Even in his book of the Marcoses' escape to Hawaii—"Malacañang to Makiki"—Aruiza was vague on the subject of Marcos undergoing dialysis, saying only that during those critical moments on the first day of the revolution, he could not see Marcos because he was resting under the care of doctors and nurses.

An hour after Rivera had talked on the phone to Marcos, the President went on national television to announce the capture of the first mutineer. In all, four were shown in public confessing their participation in the aborted coup d'etat.

Apart from the confrontation with Bongbong, the next two days at the Palace were uneventful, from Rivera's perspective, even as word came of massive crowds at Edsa and defections to the rebel side.

At around 2 a.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 24, a call came to the safe house where Rivera and several other Palace media aides stayed. A member of the kitchen staff said the First Family had made a decision to leave, but Marcos would go through with his inaugural that day.

The decision to depart came after a series of exchanges between the White House and Malacañang with the message that Marcos should step aside—a clear position succinctly relayed by Sen. Paul Laxalt in two early morning phone calls.

That morning, Rivera came to the Palace, and went to see Marcos for his inaugural at the Palace Ceremonial Hall.

"Is everything set? The teleprompter?" Marcos asked Rivera.

Rivera said that tight security outside the Palace had prevented the technician from reporting for work.

Disappointed

"He looked disappointed. I wanted to make light of it," said Rivera, a man with a sense of humor and a sunny demeanor. In normal times, he could draw a smile from the President. "He had a very solemn face that morning," Rivera said.

Midway through the address, the national television coverage was cut off by a sniper's bullet fired to the Channel 9 transmitter.

"He didn't know about it. The next thing to do was to rush the tape to Channel 9," Rivera said. But fighting had erupted there too.

Marcos went to his Study. "There was no way to make things light. The events totally devastated the man," said Rivera. "A very wan smile creased his troubled face. He looks at me and says, 'I understand there is a large crowd outside the balcony. See to it that everything is set up'."

Rivera went down to see how the address was being received by the throng that had gathered on the Palace ground.

That was the last time Rivera saw the President at the Palace. The two would meet again months later—this time in Hawaii, where Marcos had gone into exile.

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Viloria keeps WBC light fly title

Fil-Am champ survives early Aguirre flurry, wins by unanimous verdict

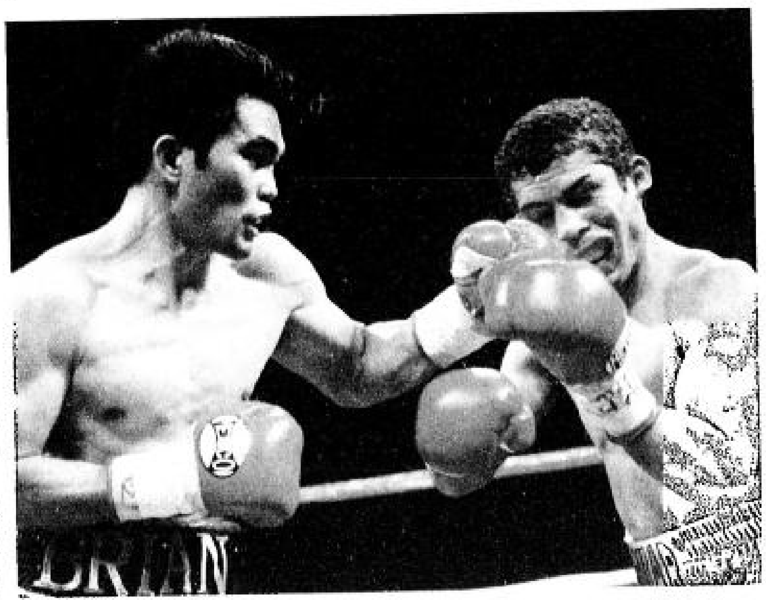
LAS VEGAS, NEVADA—Filipino-American Brian Viloria retained his World Boxing Council light flyweight title Saturday with a 12-round unanimous decision over Mexico's Jose Antonio Aguirre at the Alladin Hotel and Casino here.

The 25-year-old Viloria, nicknamed Hawaiian Punch, made his first defense of the title he won with a first-round knockout of Eric Ortiz in September.

Viloria spent much of the night fighting against the ropes as he was content to let Aguirre move forward. But the Mexican's offense vanished in the second half of the fight, allowing the champion to pull away.

The Filipino improved to 19-0 with 12 wins inside the distance as judges CJ Ross and Ray Hawkins scored the fight 116-112 and the third, Glenn Trowbridge, saw it 117-111, all in his favor.

"I need tough fights," Viloria said after the fight. "I need tough rounds. [Aguirre] did his homework and it was a great battle. He took a lot of my punches."



CHAMPION Brian Viloria (left) connects with a left to the face of Mexican challenger Jose Antonio Aguirre in the eighth round.

AP

Aguirre, who held the minimumweight crown from 2000-04, fell to 33-5-1. He has lost three straight fights, including the first two by knockout, at 108 lbs.

He seemed to hurt Viloria in the second round, landing a hard overhand right that backed the champion into a neutral corner and then following with a right to the body.

Viloria, who entered the ring to the tune of the hit Seventies television series "Hawaii-Five-O," started hot by tagging Aguirre with a big left hook followed by a flurry of punches in the first round.

Aguirre again had Viloria in trouble briefly in the third round, nearly knocking him down with a big right, but the champion, who traces his roots to Narvacan, Ilocos Sur, and grew up in Hawaii, managed to hang on.

The punishment Viloria sustained in the second and third rounds made boxing hero Manny Pacquiao cringe at press row, where he annotated the fight for Filipino viewers with Quinito Henson.

"*Nasasaktan na si* Viloria (Viloria is getting hurt)," said Pacquiao.

Viloria picked up the pace in the fourth round, which he clearly won, after being urged by his American trainer Freddie Roach to go to the body. Throwing and landing more punches, he evened things up with Aguirre.

VILORIA/ A30

Yulo & Co. wins PAL crown A30

Bulls finish off Giants for PBA crown A30

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Bulls finish off Giants, put away Fiesta title

PBA commissioner Noli Eala (second from left, front row) congratulates coach Yeng Guiao as the Bulls celebrate their victory. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

By June Navarro

COACH RYAN GREGORIO VOWED PUREfoods Chunkee would spring some surprises in yesterday's game. There weren't any.

Red Bull put down the defensive clamps in the stretch and got several clutch plays from an array of heroes to finally send the Giants down to their knees, 83-73, and capture the San Mig Coffee-PBA Fiesta Conference crown before a roaring crowd of 10,755 at the Araneta Coliseum.

James Penny was in a zone in the third quarter but solid contributions coming from Mick Pennisi, Cyrus Baguio, Topex Robinson and Finals' Most Valuable Player Lordy Tugade also helped the Bulls clinch their third franchise title since joining the league in 2000.

"There are no ready-made superstars in this team," said Red Bull coach Yeng Guiao after snaring his fifth coaching crown overall, putting him in a tie with former Toyota coach Dante Silverio at sixth place.

"We just developed and bred players using our own system," added Guiao, whose Bulls finished off the Giants in six games, 4-2.

The Bulls took the first two games, the Giants bounced back in Games 3 and 4, before Red Bull wrote *finis* through a pair of scintillating performances in Game 5 and 6.

After winning the 2002 Governors Cup, the Bulls experienced a slide after losing Davonn Harp and Pennisi due to citizenship problems and Jimwell Torion's suspension on drug charges.

"We were a championship team before the slide, but the management was committed to rebuilding the team," said Guiao, whose five titles were all import-spiced.

Pennisi had big shots in the end, including two three-pointers and a long two, while Baguio, Celino Cruz and Junthy Valenzuela made great stops that rendered the Giants scoreless in the final one minute and 33 seconds.

If there were any changes on the Giants' strategy, it was the extended time on the floor given to veteran Jun Limpot, who played for 27 minutes and finished with 16 points.

The scores:

RED BULL 83—Penny 21, Baguio 13, Pennisi 13, Tugade 11, Villanueva 8, Robinson 6, Cruz 5, Najorda 2, Fonacier 2, Valenzuela 2, Bugia 0, Torion 0.

PUREFOODS 73—Chandler 24, Limpot 16, Pingris 10, Raymundo 8, Yap Roger 8, Yap James 5, Casillo 2, Billones 0.

Quarters: 11-24, 36-40, 63-57, 83-73

Neo shines as Spring five nails NBC crown

TAGAYTAY CITY—FREE THROWS spelled the difference as Spring Cooking Oil turned back the Pagadian Explorers, 72-71, Saturday to bag the title in the National Basketball Conference's fourth pre-season tournament at the International Convention Center here.

The Cooking Oil Masters of NBC president Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla trailed 61-66 with 4:23 left but fought back via conversions from the stripe.

Spring finally took the lead at 70-69 at the 2:17 mark after Gilbert Neo's two free throws.

In the ensuing play, Neo intercepted the Explorers' inbound and went on to score the winning basket unmolested.

Bacchus/Harbour finished third by crushing Tagaytay, 90-77.

PAL INTERCLUB

Canlubang grabs Seniors plum; Luisita DQ'd

By Ernesto A. Gonzales

DAVAO—IT WAS A MONUMENTAL LAPSE, not a monumental collapse, that highlighted the shift of power from perennial winner Luisita to Canlubang in the Seniors division of the Philippine Airlines Interclub golf tournament here yesterday.

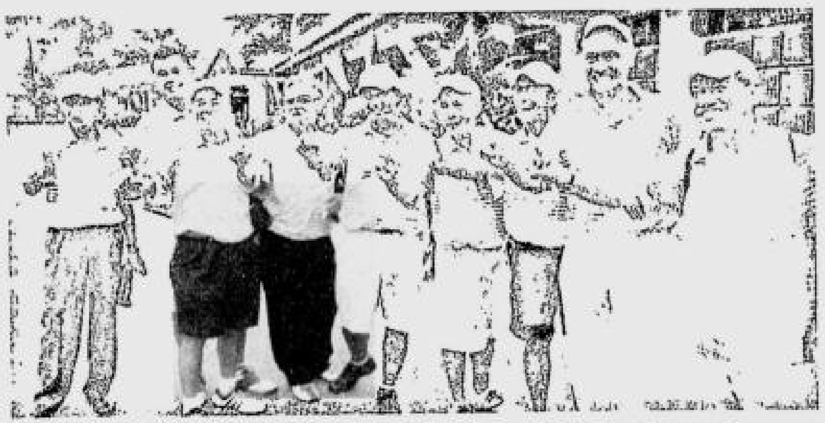
Virtually beyond recall after opening a 20-point lead in the first round, Canlubang still poured it on in the last 18 holes at Apo not knowing that Luisita, which was gunning for a record sixth straight title—and 13th overall—was already out of it due to a rules infraction.

Tournament director Buddy Resurreccion said a check of the records of players fielded in the first round showed that Seve Roxas Chua, who replaced the ailing Alex Montelibano, was not on the original Luisita roster submitted by Iggy Clavecilla during the first team captains' meeting last October.

The penalty for the oversight was disqualification not only for the player but for the entire team as well, according to Resurreccion, who added that the particular rule which Luisita broke has been there since the tournament started 59 years ago.

Richie Garcia and Clavecilla, the first two Luisita players Resurreccion informed of the disqualification, gamely accepted the verdict.

"*Patay* (We're dead)," said PSC commissioner Garcia.



NUMBER ONE: Canlubang's greying battlers—(from left), Baxo Adriano, Tony Olives, Tony Sarmiento, Bing Bunye, Lino Magpantay, Luigi Yulo, Rolly Viray, Tommy Manotoc and team coordinator Darly Patalot—show who's No.1. JESS YUSON

"*Sayang pala ang kayod namin* (Our efforts went for naught)," Seniors rookie and Canlubang manager Luigi Yulo said in jest.

Yulo surprised himself and his teammates by leading his squad's 239 output for the day with a tournament-best 53 points.

Backing up Yulo were Rolly Viray (50), Tommy Manotoc (49), Bing Bunye (45) and Tony Olives (42) as Canlubang easily closed the deal even if Luisita's grievous mistake was not discovered.

With the unexpected turn of events, the Laguna-based team savored its first Seniors victory with a whopping 31-point advantage over Alabang, which was elevated to second place, 485-454.

Manila Southwoods took third with 444.

"The future looks good," said Manotoc, who clinched his third straight individual title with a 101 total. He noted that Canlubang mainstays Dave Hernandez and Jose Ma. Hechanova are also Seniors-bound soon.

Dethroned and disqualified, Luisita took some consolation in having outscored Canlubang in the last round with a 247 output as former national amateur champion Francis Gaston matched Yulo's 53 points. Luisita finished with a 473 aggregate.

"Now we go for a championship double," said Yulo, whose team will be gunning to raise its record title harvest to 13 starting Wednesday in the men's Regular tournament which Manila Southwoods won by four points over Canlubang last year.

The monumental lapse proved to be not a monopoly for Luisita, however, as Founders division stalwart Negros Occidental also got the axe for the same infraction by fielding Luis Coscolluela.

Fil-Am San Francisco was relegated to fourth in Friendship play which was decided the other day due to the same boo-boo.

Wack Wack, starring its club president and Commission on Elections chair Ben Abalos, succeeded Villamor as Founders champion with a 439 total. Orchard was second with 426 while Cebu Country Club grabbed third at 424.

Negros would have finished second in the division with its 433 aggregate.

Lanang topped the Sportswriters Division pulling away with a 425 total. Paoay nipped Maharlika for second place—based on the score of their sixth player—after they had finished tied at 404.

This year's edition has Action Asia, Airbus, Boeing, GE Aviation, GMA 7, Honda Cars Davao, INQ7.net, Joey 92.3, Royal Caribbean International, PAGCOR, People Asia, Premier Wine and Spirits, Rudy Project, UMBN and Uraya Land Development Corp. as major sponsors.

ABS-CBN International, Fortune Tobacco and Radio Mindanao Network are the corporate sponsors while 96.3 Wrock, Asia Brewery, Century Park Hotel, Honda Megamotors, SM City Davao and Tanduay Rhum are the minor sponsors.

The final standings:

CHAMPIONSHIP—Canlubang 485 (246-239); Alabang 454 (226-228); M. Southwoods 444 (225-219); Lumbia 361 (185-176); Fil-Oz Sydney 272 (139-133); Ang Tay 261 (151-110).

FOUNDERS—Wack Wack 439 (227-212); Orchard 426 (214-212); Cebu 424 (218-206); Valley 422 (207-215); Villamor 421 (220-201); MGC 414 (207-207); SFO Crystal Spring 410 (208-202); Riviera 410 (205-205); Aguinaldo 402 (197-205); Pueblo 398 (207-191); Camp Evangelista 39 6 (194-202); Iloilo 387 (182-205); Eagle Ridge 368 (188-180); Alta Vista 358 (186-172).

SPORTWRITERS—Lanang 425 (198-227); Paoay 404 (183-221), Maharlika 404 (200-204); Davao City 399 (189-210); Apo 399 (185-214); Hawaii Fil-Am 393 (184-209); Rancho Palos Verdes 392 (185-207); Team LA 390 (187-203); Baguio 389 (174-215); Navy 386 (176-210); Texas Golf 368 (175-193); Mactan Coral 363 (168-195); Bacolod 360 (164-196); Club Intramuros 359 (164-195); Veterans 348 (155-193); Fil-Am Florida 343 (163-180); Sienna Plantation 340 (154-186); Zamboanga 329 (144-185); UP Tee Jots 329 (157-172); Iligan 325 (155-170); San Juanico 307 (139-168); Club Filipino 302 (140-162); Cotabato 301 (135-166).

Once in a hundred years

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

HERMIE Rivera, the boxing man, calls this a lost message.

He filed it from Las Vegas where he covered Manny Pacquiao's historic rematch with Mexico's Erik Morales last month.

The good news is that we've finally retrieved the dispatch from our e-mail.

Actually, Hermie should be busy filing a post-mortem on Brian Viloria's latest fight.

Late as it is, we keep this promise to share with readers a good portion of Mr. Rivera's recovered dispatch:

* * *

A HUNDRED-FIFTY DOLLARS WAGERED on Manny Pacquiao can bring in one hundred ($100) while one hundred-five crisp US notes placed on Erik Morales give a hundred-dollar return.

But don't go knocking on your neighbor's doors betting your carabao lest you look foolish and dumb if you wind up making the wrong bet.(You can bring in the mascot with its apt comments)

Meanwhile, more Latinos are expressing preference for the man called "Pacman" as he gears up for his showdown with the terrible Tijuana Mex.

It is probable that boxing aficionado (Mexican-American) Raul Rodriguez, a respiratory therapist at Washington Township Hospital in Fremont, California, just got swept up with the Pac Mania he's picking Pacquiao to beat Morales.

Said Señor Rodriguez: "I grew up in East Los Angeles watching the likes of Ruben Olivares, Salvador Sanchez and Julio Cesar Chavez. My dad used to take me to the Forum to see a good scrap. It would have been fun seeing those guys with Manny.

"Pacquiao is right up there with them in terms of fire, fury and brilliance. I'm picking Manny Pacquiao to beat Erik Morales because of motivation. You cannot help admire a guy carrying the pride and honor of 80 million Filipinos.

"In many ways, Manny emulates what Filipino-American workers are known for—hardwork, talent and determination.

"His blood and guts are to be admired especially after firing back at Morales despite being cut in the fifth round the last time they met.

"Manny is the hungrier, faster and younger fighter of the two combatants. Speed kills and that's what Manny should employ to beat the great Morales.

"I've seen all of Manny Paquiao's fights through PPV and DVD's my buddy Emmanuel Rivera gives me and I just like the guy. And Pacman gives great interviews.

"A good example that he is his own man is that he doesn't rely on translators to express himself on national television. He took initiative in learning English."

Thanks, amigo. Ironically, nationalism sells in boxing. It is special to hear one Mexican aficionado root for a fistic treasure like Pacquiao.

A national treasurer, indeed. And also very, very rare.

"Manny Pacquiao comes once in a hundred years and I'm happy for the Filipino people. He has elevated not only boxing but his fellow Filipinos in terms of worldwide recognition," Rodriguez concluded.

However, the Arville brothers, John Jr. and Raymond, certified Pacquiao supporters—cautioned Manny to have at least 11 rounds of fistic brilliance in order to topple Terrible Erik.

As it would turn out, Pacman needed only 10 ferociously fought rounds to fashion out the biggest win of his checkered career.

MONTEBON: Return trip to finals

ARIAS: Happy to vie in home race

Montebon, Arias top Dumaguete Milo run

DUMAGUETE CITY—VETERAN runners Rolan Montebon and Merlita Arias yesterday topped the 23rd National MILO Marathon 21K elimination races to book a return trip to the finals in December.

Montebon wisely paced himself for the first 20 kilometers before making his move against early leader Mendel Lopez.

"[Montebon] caught up with me near the finish line," Lopez, who settled for second place, five seconds behind, said in Filipino.

Aside from berths to the National Finals on Dec. 10 in Metro Manila, Montebon (1:15:32) also won the top purse of P10,000 while Lopez (1:15:37) pocketed P6,000.

Montebon, of San Jose, Negros Oriental, and Lopez of Sta. Catalina town used to run in the Cebu City legs of the foot race held in partnership with Bayview Park Hotel-Manila, Adidas, Cebu Pacific and Powerbar and were glad to race in their home province.

Montebon's University of Cebu pal Miljone Lutene (1:17:50) will also advance to the finals for placing third.

The 32-year-old Arias, a consistent finalist since the 18th Milo Marathon, clocked 1:34:45 to rule the women's 21K.

Placing second was Medelyn Carter in 1:49:13, with Juvelyn Magnate third in 1:59:38.

Top three finishers in the 5K fun run: Men—Revodem Aranas, Armando Pabuaya, Giovanni Besin; Women—Eden Renacia, Dhona Nuelisa Abrenic, Jennifer Montero

Viloria keeps WBC light flyweight belt

From page A29

Viloria turned the fight around by getting off the ropes. He hit the charging Aguirre with a pair of hard rights to start the seventh, then began a pattern that lasted the rest of the fight.

The Filipino, a former US Olympian, gave Aguirre a particularly bad beating in the 11th round when he caught him with a big right to the nose that quickly drew blood from the Mexican's nostrils.

The victory gave Viloria more incentive to go after WBC interim flyweight champion Jorge "El Travieso" Arce, the brash but popular Mexican who has indicated his readiness to fight the Filipino in the undercard of the third Manny Pacquiao-Erik Morales showdown on Sept. 16.

In the other championship bout, Mexico's Antonio Margarito retained the World Boxing Organization welterweight crown, stopping compatriot Manuel Gomez in the first round. *Salven L. Lagumbay, Contributor; INQUIRER wires*

MALAYSIAN OPEN

Korean Wi bags title; Miñoza fades away

KUALA LUMPUR—KOREAN CHARLIE WI SAvored the proudest moment of his career after sealing a one-stroke victory in the rain-affected Malaysian Open on Sunday.

The Philippines' Frankie Miñoza, on the other hand, saw his campaign fizzle with a 74 that dropped him way below the final leaderboard.

Wi, 34, birdied the last hole to complete a nine-under-par 63 at the Kuala Lumpur Golf and Country Club and finish at 19 under par, one ahead of Thailand's Thongchai Jaidee in a tournament reduced to three rounds.

Miñoza had a triple bogy on the par 3 third hole and never recovered after that, finishing in a tie for 63rd-67th places with a 212.

"I'm really speechless as coming here to Malaysia, I wasn't expecting to win, as I was home last week and I had no idea I would make so many putts like I did today," Wi told reporters.

"God was looking out for me today as I got a lot of good breaks and then Thongchai misses his putt on the last hole which really helped me win this championship," he added.

"But this win is definitely the biggest win of my career and the proudest moment in my career."

Jaidee, looking to become only the sixth player to win a tournament in three successive years, carded a closing 66.

He had the opportunity to force a playoff but failed with a 20-foot birdie putt at the last hole to miss his chance. *Reuters*

Sisters act helps lift Highlands

SISTERS LINNEL AND ANGELA DE VILLA powered defending champion Tagaytay Highlands to a 2-1 victory over Manila Southwoods recently in the Ladies Federation Golf League action played out in various courses.

Linnel teamed up with Farah Imperial to win the high-low point while Angela played with Maline Flores and won the aggregate duel.

Connie Campos and Glo Domingo took the foursomes for Southwoods.

Alabang and Forest Hills finally broke into the win column pulsating 2-1 triumphs over their respective opponents.

Alabang downed Sta. Elena while Forest brought Riviera back to earth with a win that ended the latter's back-to-back wins with bonus points.

After Lorna Tabuena and Olive Pizarro claimed the foursomes for Alabang, the two other matches ended in a tie with Finina Gorres-Christine Naidoo figuring in a standoff with Alice Jose-Nancy Co and Vernie Oledan-Vivian Chua also splitting the point with Lily Chan-Nancy Ortega.

Winning the match for Forest Hills were Violy Pegels-Lily Young and Nelda Roguel-Marichi Ojeda.

Visiting Wack Wack sustained its hot streak after a hard-earned 2-1 victory over Royal Northwoods of Bulacan.

Little man soars high

New York's 5-foot-9 guard rules slam dunk contest

HOUSTON, TEXAS—NATE Robinson won the Slam Dunk Contest Saturday, and Dirk Nowitzki triumphed in the Shootout, part of the National Basketball Association festivities leading up to Sunday's All-Star Game.

A rookie guard on the New York Knicks, Robinson needed a dozen chances in a tiebreaker to overcome Philadelphia 76ers swingman Andre Iguodala, who put home one of the most difficult and imaginative dunks in the 23-year history of the event.

Robinson, diminutive by NBA standards at 5-feet-9-inches, was inspired by the victory 20 years ago of 5-foot-7-inch Spud Webb, who advised Robinson prior to the contest and helped him convert a dunk in the second round.

Standing in the lane, Webb bounced a pass to a charging Robinson, who soared over Webb and put down a one-handed hammer for a perfect score of 50.

Both Robinson and Iguodala totaled 94 in the final round and went to a one-dunk tiebreaker. Robinson required a dozen tosses that included three missed dunks before finally putting home a dunk that began at halfcourt with an underhand toss off the backboard and ended with him putting the ball through his legs before the slam.

Needing a 47 to tie, Iguodala tried a between-the-legs reverse along the baseline, missing one before converting. He came up one point short, prompting All-Star teammate Allen Iverson to playfully shout, "We were robbed!"

Iverson assisted Iguodala on his second dunk of the first round, one of the most memorable in the history of the event.

Iverson stood behind the backboard with the ball while Iguodala began off the deep corner out of bounds. Iguodala took an angular approach toward the backboard as Iverson threw the ball softly off the back of the backboard.

Almost impossibly, Iguodala caught the carom in mid-air, remained aloft as he soared below the rim and threw in a reverse dunk that seemed to defy gravity.

In the Shootout, Nowitzki, perhaps the best shooting big man in the history of the game, joined Larry Bird, Glen Rice and Peja Stojakovic as the only forwards to win in the 21-year history of the event.

NOWITZKI: Three-point champ AFP

A revolutionary power forward for Dallas and a Most Valuable Player candidate this season, Nowitzki was steady but not spectacular in draining his deep shot. His final-round score of 18 matched the lowest since 2000.

After Washington Wizards guard Gilbert Arenas opened the final round with a score of 16 points, Nowitzki began by making four on his first rack of balls from the right corner—a spot from which he rarely shoots during games—and remained even throughout the round, sinking three on his final rack. *AFP*

Davis writes Winter Olympics history

TURIN, ITALY—SHANI DAVIS CREATed Winter Games history on Saturday before the specter of doping again hit the Olympics.

Davis became the first black to win an individual gold medal at a Winter Olympics, combining with Joey Cheek in an American one-two finish Saturday in the 1,000-meter speedskating final.

Soon after Davis completed his victory, Italian authorities raided the residences of Austrian biathlon and cross-country staff in the Alps looking for banned substances and the IOC sanctioned random drug tests on "a number of Austrian cross-country and biathlon athletes."

Alfred Eder, a trainer for the Austrian biathlon team, said more than a dozen police searched and interviewed athletes for four hours.

"We are very angry," Eder said. "It is not very gentlemanly."

It was a day of firsts in the Alps, with Kjetil Andre Aamodt becoming the first man to win the same Alpine event at three Olympics, and Janica Kostelic becoming the first woman to win four Olympic Alpine gold medals. *AP*

Nissan golf: Rory still up

LOS ANGELES—RORY SABBATINI MADE A five-foot birdie on the 18th hole Saturday that allowed him to finish the day the same way he started—with a four-shot lead in the Nissan Open and in total command of his game. Sabbatini shot a 67 and was at 14-under 199. Fred Couples had a 65 and was tied for second with Craig Barlow, who shot 67. "I'm comfortable with the lead," Sabbatini said. Despite making the cut, Tiger Woods withdrew with the flu, the first time in his pro career he has left in the middle of the tournament for health reasons. *AP*

MARTIN Straka (top) of Czech Republic fights with Jarkoo Ruutu of Finland during the ice hockey men's preliminary round Czech Republic vs Finland at the 2006 Winter Olympics at the Palasport Olimpico in Turin. Ruutu had earlier rammed into Czech Jaromir Jagr, knocking the NHL star to the ice bloodied. AFP

POC did not blink in cage row—Cojuangco

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

SAYING THE PHILIPPINE OLYMPIC Committee is not singing a different tune, POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco said in an interview the other day that "nothing has changed" in the country's bid to regain membership in the Fiba (International Basketall Federation).

"We are following the Memorandum of Understanding between the Fiba and POC which requires that the five basketball stakeholders (PBA, PBL, UAAP, NCAA and former Sen. Joey Lina, president of the Basketball Association of the Philippines), form a new and unified association on or before the March 31 deadline. Right now, we're on track. There's no problem."

Dispelling rumors that the POC has "softened up," Cojuangco said "nothing has changed." He added that once the new association's Constitution and bylaws is finalized by the five stakeholders by next week, the new cage body would seek recognition from the POC general assembly to become the newest national sports association for basketball. Whether or not the name BAP would be maintained, if only for its sentimental or historical value, or a new one would be adopted is left to the discretion of the stakeholders.

My sources, however, said there could be a legal problem in using the name BAP because veteran basketball man Nic Jorge owns the legal right to the name Basketball Association of the Philippines Inc. He is ready to go to court if anyone messes with it, my sources added.

The embattled BAP was expelled last June from the local Olympic body by 33 members of the POC general assembly. In voting for the BAP's ouster, the assembly said the national sports association for basketball did not only show disrespect to the POC by reneging on an agreement, but it was concerned with the embarrassing performances of BAP-supported national teams in recent years.

After the BAP was expelled, the Philippine Basketball Federation was formed to take its place and was recognized by the POC. While the expulsion of the 70-year-old BAP did not sit well with some basketball diehards, many say the POC should not be faulted for its move. The BAP has only itself to blame for its misfortunes.

Even former basketball official and now Cebu Rep. Eduardo Gullas once urged the BAP "to accept its expulsion from the POC and give the PBF all the room to perform its duty as the new governing body for Philippine basketball." A BAP vice president for the Visayas during the administration of two-time Fiba president Gonzalo "Lito" Puyat and former coach of the multititled UV Lancers, Gullas was earlier tapped to head the PBF, but he begged off citing old age and his duties in Congress. In his place, Mauricio "Moying" Martelino, a longtime secretary general of the Asian Basketball Confederation (ABC), was elected unopposed.

In the aftermath of the BAP's ouster from the POC, Fiba suspended the Philippines from all international cage tournaments under its aegis, including last year's 23rd Southeast Asian Games, where the Filipinos were the defending men's cage champions.

However, Fiba secretary general Patrick Baumann said the Philippines could still regain its Fiba membership by forming another cage body on or before March 31, 2006.

"I'm confident the five stakeholders would get the job done and meet the March 31 deadline," Cojuangco said.

The BAP was expelled from the POC for reneging on an agreement it forged with the POC regarding the formation of a well-trained national team following the humiliating setbacks suffered by the Philippines in recent years.

JVC badminton Cebu regionals kick off April 3

THE JVC BADMINTON REGIONAL CIRCUIT BEGINS April 3 in Cebu City with Pampanga, Davao and Bacolod hosting the three other legs.

The four-stage swing stakes not only cash prizes but also berths in the JVC Open Badminton Championships slated in Manila in July.

The JVC regionals, sponsored by JVC, Victor (exclusively distributed by Peome Industrial Sales), Lactacyd and Bingo Bonanza and backed by The STAR, Pinoy Exchange, Pioneer, Sunbolt , Alaska and Cebu Holiday Spa, is now accepting registration.

For inquiries and complete details, log on to www.jvcbadminton.com or e-mail at jvcbadminton@hotmail.com or call 09178050702 (Tonette); 09178050601 (Carol); 09175288970 (Nelson).

Interpreting the Interpreter

By Percy D. Della

COMMENTARY

SIX MONTHS INTO EARLY RETIREMENT, I am back in California state service as a "retarded" annuitant or retired "irritant," take your pick—to work on a project for Arnold's army.

This gig through June is with Mr. Schwarzenegger's energy advisers. My job is to help make his energy policies crystal clear to the electorate, I mean the people. After a bruising first term, Conan the Republican has announced he'll run again for governor of the Golden State.

Mother nature has been fickle here of late. The calendar says winter, but the weather's been spring-like, confusing the flowers to bloom ahead of time.

Anyway, *kababayans* hungry for news from home come up to me in parks, at the bus stop, in restaurants, etc. The hottest item on their plate is, you'll never guess it—Manny Pacquiao and his expanding posse of admirers.

The one member of Manny's planet who seems to cause all the curiosity is someone named Joe Ramos.

Mr. Ramos does not cook Manny's meals, clean his plate, drive his car or make his bed when the Pacman arrives in Los Angeles.

According to news reports and column items, he is supposed to be the Filipino champion's interpreter. As Pacquiao's purse has expanded of late, so has Joe's clout in Manny's camp.

On payday after his triumph over Erik Morales in their encore fight, Pacquiao rewarded Joe with a kingly sum of $50,000.

Such a windfall makes Joe one of, if not the highest paid interpreters on the planet.

The American Interpreters Association estimates there are 12,000 to 15,000 interpreters and translators in the United States. Many of them earn $30,000 to $60,000 annually—making Joe's one-time paycheck something to shoot for in their lifetime.

But the sporting world knows that Manny has been freelancing, been doing his own interpreting. He has taken excessive liberties with the King's language of late.

Meantime, where has Joe been, sleeping on post, or doing other chores?

I can almost hear, an editor friend should he get the chance to confront Mr. Ramos.

The friend's query would be short and sweet: "Joe, *ano ba talaga ang agimat mo?*" (Joe, what sort of talisman have you got?)

Well, we would rather leave the Ramos followup to other interested parties, gossip columnists included.

Sports Note: Is it really necessary to impose the WBC international super featherweight title on a bankable fighter like Pacquiao? Is he aware that each time he comes out to box sporting that belt, the WBC deducts a substantive sum as sanction fee? A friend in the know says this is one of the greatest perfidies since the sale of the Brooklyn Bridge more than once by con artists in various eras.

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GINTONG LAHI AWARDS

Local horse racing's best and brightest feted tonight

THE BEST AND THE BRIGHTEST PERFORMERS of local horse racing the past year will be honored during the 8th Philtobo Gintong Lahi Awards tonight at the Strumm's Restaurant along Jupiter Street in Makati City.

Local gallopers Speed Advantage, Real Spicy, Empire King, Euro Bucks, Juggernaut and Special Edition, as well as import Wild Orchid head the elite cast of nominees in the equine category.

Leading the nominees in the human category are Hermie Esguerra, Aristeo "Putch" Puyat, Noel Carino, Philtobo director David Lee and a slew of other notable personalities who stood out during the 2005 racing season.

"We're looking forward to another memorable Gintong Lahi Awards night," said Philtobo president Bienvenido "Nonoy" Niles Jr.

The Gintong Lahi Awards, considered as the Oscars of local racing, was set up eight years ago to honor the past racing season's top performers.

Wild Orchid emerged as last year's most dominating import.

The complete list of nominees:

Equine category

Two-Year Old Colt—Dixie The Younger, Don Exequiel and Manila's Gem; **Two-Year-Old Filly**—Juggernaut, Pechanga and Special Edition; **Three-Year-Old Colt**—Real Spicy, Thywilbedone and Speed Advantage; **Three-Year-Old Filly**—Euro Bucks and Vivere; **Older Filly/Mare**—Cat's Gold and Cover Girl; **Older Horse**—Air Force One, Empire King, Stallone and West Bound; **Sprint**—Stallone and Vivere; **Imported Horse**—Sound Offer, Stowaway Lass and Wild Orchid; **Local Horse**—Cover Girl, Empire King and Speed Advantage.

Human category

Jockey of the Year—AB Alcasid, Jr., JB Guce, JB Hernandez, PR Dilema and FM Raquel, Jr.; **Trainer of the Year**—Antonio Alcasid, Jose S. Fernandez, Rey Henson, Ernesto Roxas and Andrew Sanchez; **Owner of the Year**—C&H Enterprises, Herminio Esguerra, David Lee, Edmond Moreno and Roberto Yutadco.

Breeding Category

Breeder of the Year—Noel Cariño, Herminio S. Esguerra, Leonardo M. Javier, Jr. and Aristeo G. Puyat; **Broodmare of the Year**—Lady Ping and Misty Rose; **Stallion of the Year**- Khozaam, Perfect Halo and Royal Premier.

SPORTSWATCH

Beach volley refs' course set

THE BEACH VOLLEYBALL ASSOCIATION OF THE Philippines, in partnership with Philippine Volleyball Federation, will hold a five-day National Beach Volleyball Referees Course on Feb. 22-26 at the Pilapil Hall and LSGH Sand Court at La Salle Greenhills, Mandaluyong City. Rustico Camangian, head coach of the national beach volley team, will supervise the seminar. For inquiries, call 526-8438 or 721-2000 local 718.

PCAP 5-cock derby today

SEVENTY MATCHES ARE ON TAP IN THE PINOY Cockers Association of the Philippines (PCAP) 5-cock derby series starting at 5 p.m. today at the Makati Coliseum. All eyes will be on Jake Macasaet's entry, San Vicente Ferrer, which try to hold on to a shaky lead in the Cocker of the Year battle with 11 points. For inquiries on the derby sponsored by B-Meg Derby, call 896-3545 or 895-6475.

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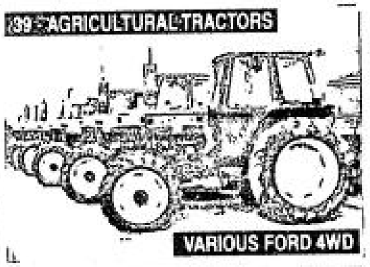
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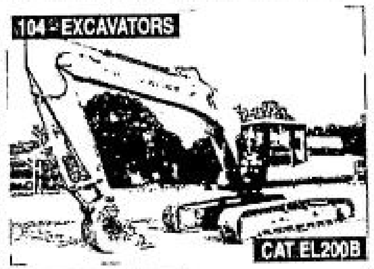
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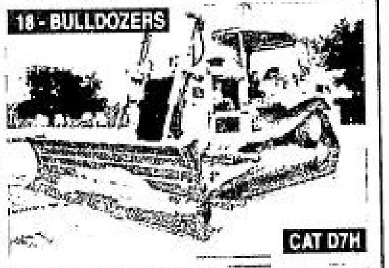
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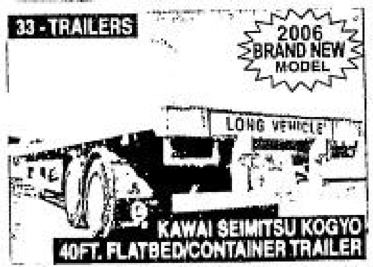
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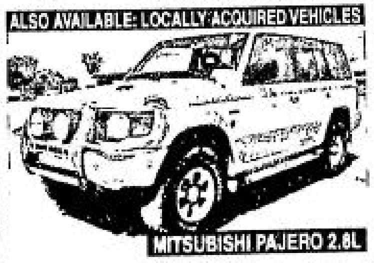
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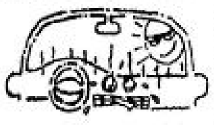

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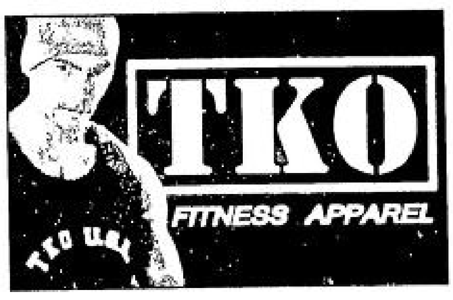

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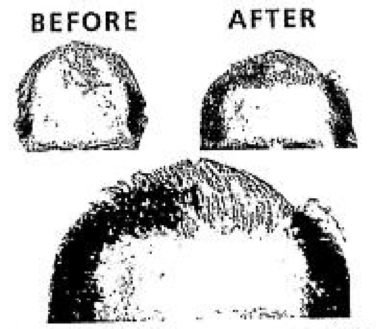

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Editor **Emmie G. Velarde**

Stick to issues—Martinez

FAP head says his quarrel is with Vic del Rosario, not Edu

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

"LET US STICK TO THE MAIN ISSUES," SAID Leo Martinez, director general of the Film Academy of the Philippines (FAP), referring to the ongoing word war involving himself and Vicente del Rosario, presidential consultant for the entertainment industry; Edu Manzano, Optical Media Board (OMB) chief; and Jacky Atienza, Film Development Council of the Philippines (FDCP) chair.

Martinez has accused Del Rosario of initiating the new Sharing Scheme for the Metro Manila Film Festival (MMFF) 2005 funds—cutting down the shares of the FAP and Motion Picture Anti-Film Piracy Council and allotting 20 percent each to the OMB and the FDCP.

"I will not be distracted," Martinez vowed. "I am still waiting for an explanation of the legal and ethical implications [of the reallocation]. Funds from local government units cannot be funneled back to national government offices like the OMB and the FDCP, which already receive funding through the General Appropriations Act."

Martinez insisted that Del Rosario should do the explaining, "not his cronies Manzano and Atienza."

Dictator?

"Is he a dictator?" Martinez said "Why is he saying that he didn't need to consult the FAP [on the matter]?"

As for the raging controversies involving OMB, Martinez shrugged, "That's [Manzano's] problem. This is not between him and me."

Both Del Rosario and Manzano have implied

STICK/ A2-5

Michiko, 'Maxi,' 'Magnifico'!

CHEER™ FACTOR

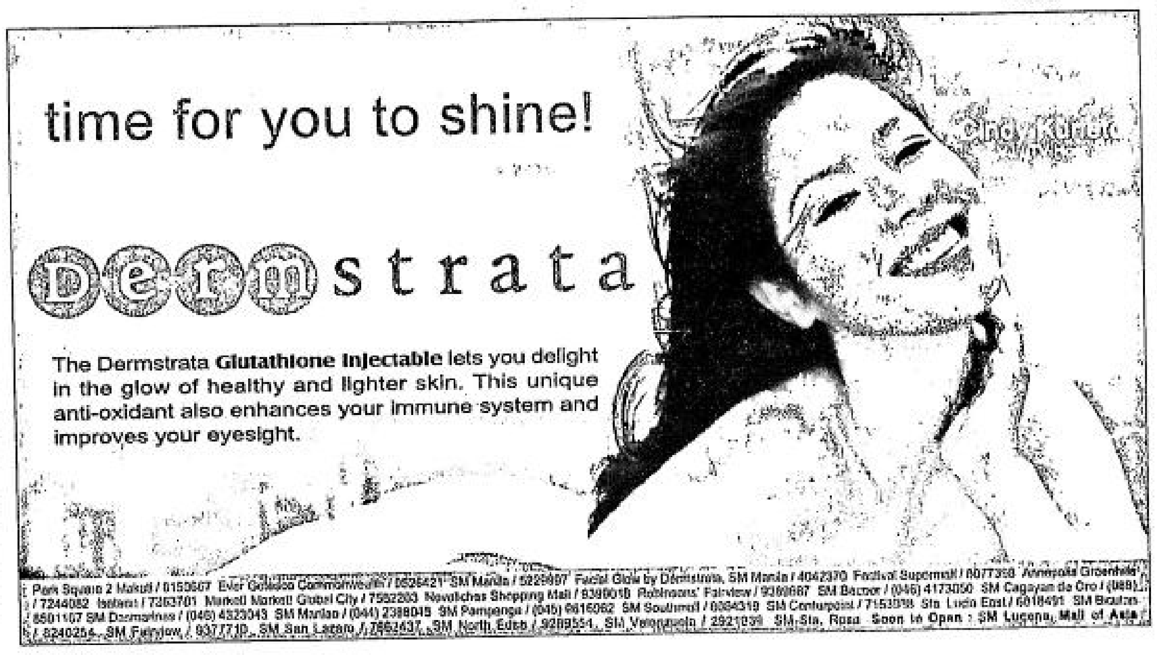
By Bayani San Diego Jr.

TRIPLE TRIUMPHS.

A day after ufo pictures' "Ang Pagdadalaga ni Maximo Oliveros" won the Teddy for Best Feature Film at the Berlin International Film Festival, more good news followed: It was also declared Best Film by the International Jury of Kinderfilmfest and Second Best Film by the Children's Jury.

The Teddy is for gay-theme

MICHIKO/ A2-5



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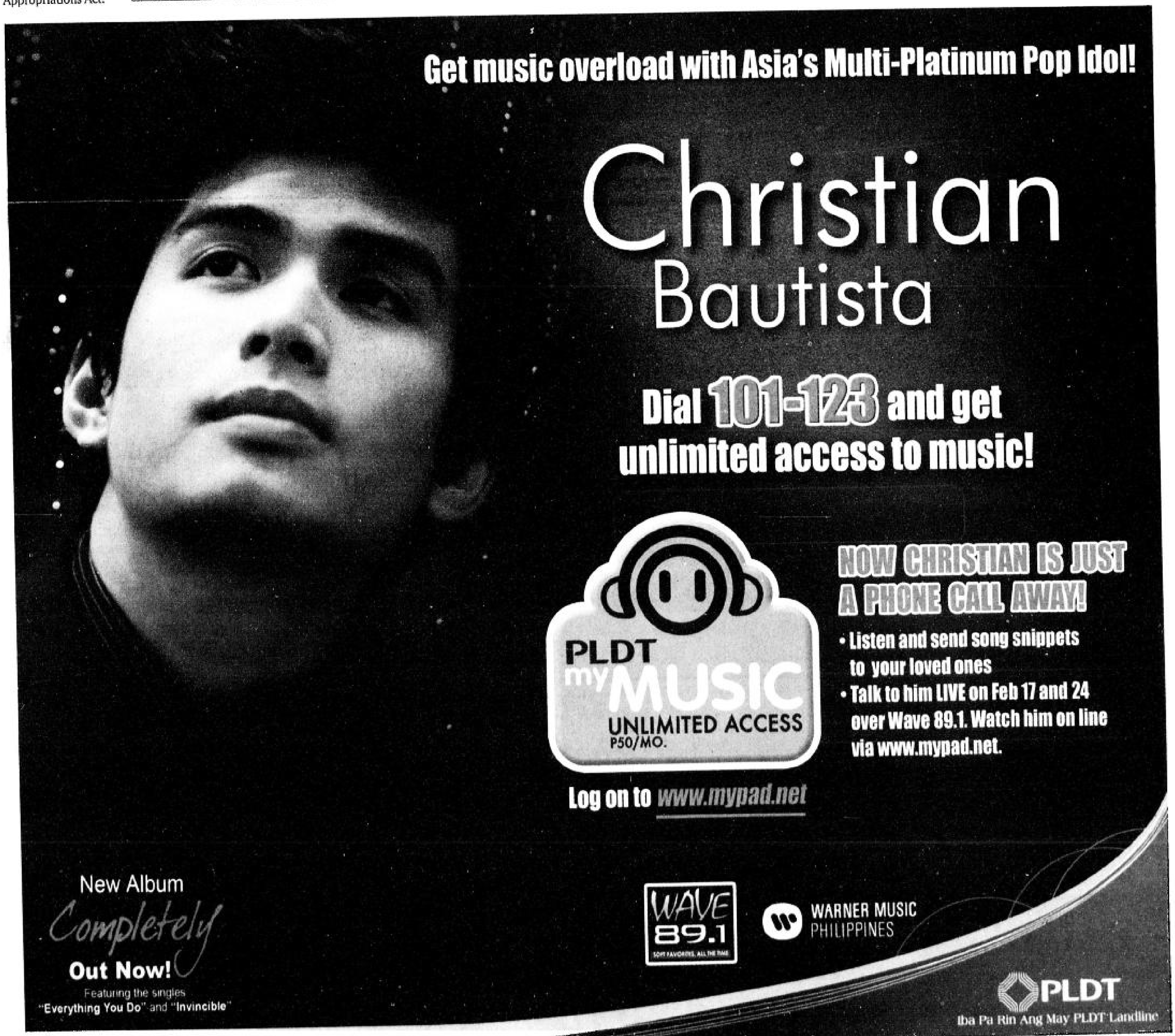

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Or visit www.ayalamuseum.org

AYALA CINEMAS

THX

Reserve your seats by texting SURESEATS GB3 or SURESEATS G4 to 2333 (Globe) or 211 (Smart) or log on to www.sureseats.com for web reservations.

Movie schedules may change without prior notice. For verification call 729 7777

G1 GLORIETTA 1	1 PINK PANTHER	2 CLOSE TO YOU	3 FIREWALL	4 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU			
G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 CLOSE TO YOU	2 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN	3 THX FIREWALL 1:10, 3:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	4 GOAL	5 AEON FLUX	6 FUN W/ DICK & JANE	7 PINK PANTHER
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 PINK PANTHER 1:05, 3:15, 5:25, 9:45	2 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN 11:15, 2:00, 4:45, 7:30, 10:10					
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX PINK PANTHER 2:40, 4:50, 7:00, 9:10, 11:20 GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN 3:05, 5:50, 8:35, 11:20 GUARANTEED SEATS	3 FIREWALK 2:00, 4:15, 6:30, 8:45, 11:00 GUARANTEED SEATS	4 MUNICH 1:30, 4:40, 7:50, 11:00 GUARANTEED SEATS	5 AEON FLUX 1:05, 3:10, 5:15, 7:20, 9:25, 11:30 GUARANTEED SEATS		
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX PINK PANTHER	2 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN	3 CLOSE TO YOU	4 GOAL	5 AEON FLUX		
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 PINK PANTHER	2 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN	3 CLOSE TO YOU	4 MUNICH			

AYALA CINEMAS

GREENBELT 1 Onstage AYALA CENTER

The perfect spot for concerts, stage plays and corporate events is now accepting bookings for May to July 2006

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Customer Service text hotline: Customer Service text hotline:	0917 6095900 Glorietta - 752 7272; from 10am to 8pm Greenbelt - 757 4853; from 11am to 12mn
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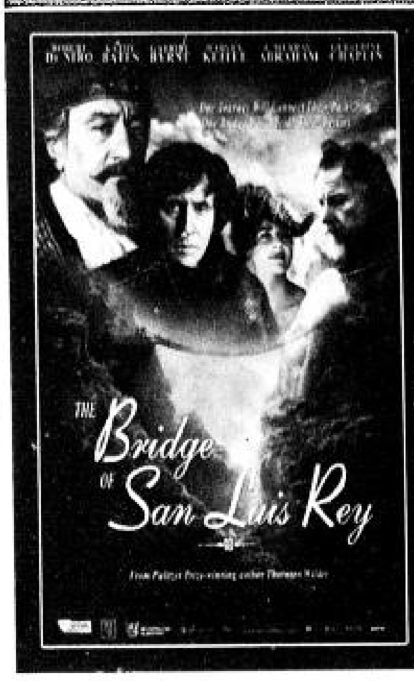
1 CLOSE TO YOU
2 GOAL
3 AEON FLUX
4 PINK PANTHER
5 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN

EVENTS! EVENTS!

Christian Bautista
Completely
MALL TOUR
Pavilion Mall
Feb. 18, Saturday, 4pm
Metro Point Mall
Feb. 25, Saturday, 4pm
Market! Market!
Feb. 26, Sunday, 4pm


The Bridge of San Luis Rey
From Pulitzer Prize-winning author Thornton Wilder

Exclusive
SCREENING
Robinsons Movieworld
GALLERIA
starting FEBRUARY 22

from the Pulitzer Prize winning novel by Thornton Wilder

From the backstreet brothels and theatres of the 18th century Lima to the majestic courts of Spain, from the palaces of Peruvian Archbishops to the inquisitorial missions from Madrid, and from the sanctuary of Inca shrines high up among Andean villages to the straits of the American coastlines, comes a story of chance. Perhaps an accident, perhaps not. But one thing is certain. Five seemingly unrelated voyagers find themselves united in the same destiny. Five people on separate journeys for different reasons, happen to be crossing the bridge at San Luis Rey at noon on the fateful day of July 20th, 1714. The bridge breaks, and all five fall to their deaths in the deep gorge below. Was it chance or the hand of God that brought them together on that fatal day at that place and that moment in time? Or were they in some way to blame for what happened to them?

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Gateway Cineplex 10
DOLBY DIGITAL-EX

CLOSE TO YOU 12:30 / 2:50 / 5:10 / 7:30 / 9:50	BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN 1:20 / 4:10 / 7:00 / 9:50	PINK PANTHER 1:05 / 3:15 / 5:25 / 7:35 / 9:45	GLOBE PLATINUM CINEMA
THE NEW WORLD 12:30 / 3:20	FIREWALL 12:30 / 2:50 / 5:10 / 7:30 / 9:50	AEON FLUX 1:00 / 3:10 / 5:20 / 7:30 / 9:40	BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN 12:40 / 3:30 / 6:20 / 9:10
I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU 12:10 / 2:35 / 5:00 / 7:25 / 9:50	GOAL 12:10 / 2:35 / 5:00 / 7:25 / 9:50 MUNICH 6:00 / 9:00	FUN WITH DICK & JANE 1:00 / 3:10 / 5:20 / 7:30 / 9:40	ONLY P120 ADMISSION GLOBE PLATINUM P249/P299

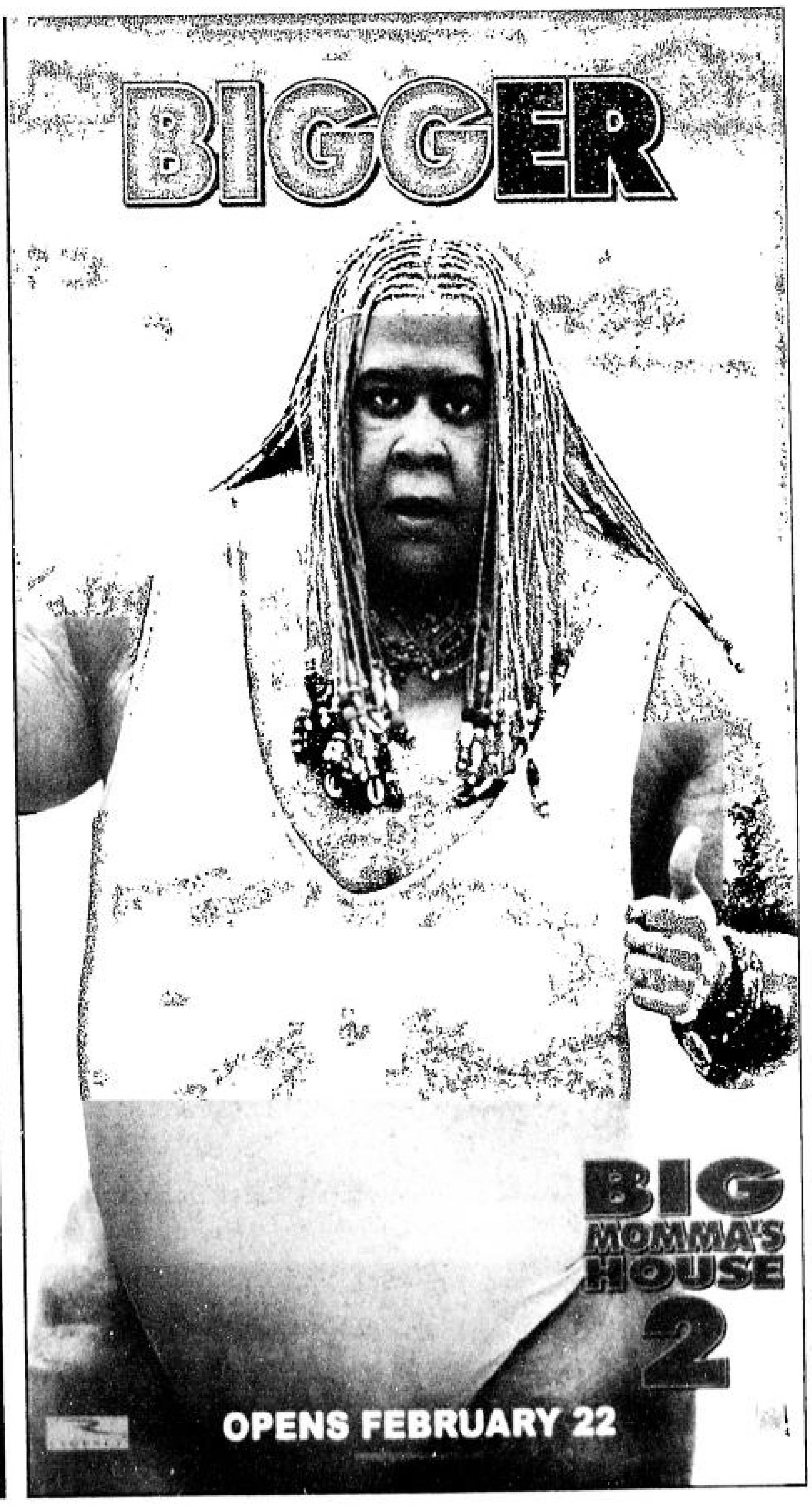
AliMALL CINEMAS

GOAL 12:00 R4 / 1:25 / 3:50 / 6:15 / 8:40	CLOSE TO YOU 12:00 R3 / 1:40 / 4:00 / 6:20 / 8:40	3 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN 12:10 R3 / 2:20 / 5:15 / 8:05
PINK PANTHER 12:00 / 2:10 / 4:20 / 6:30 / 8:40	I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU 12:15 R4 / 1:20 / 3:45 / 6:10 / 8:35	DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

For ticket inquiries, please call TicketNet at 911-5555 or log on to www.ticketnet.com.ph

ARANETA COLISEUM

WWE RAW LIVE TOUR	Bb PILIPINAS CORONATION NIGHT
FEB.24, FRI. 6 pm & FEB. 25 SAT 4 pm	MARCH 4, SATURDAY 8 pm


BIGGER
BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2
OPENS FEBRUARY 22

ROUNDUP

Pinay in US dance finals

CHERYL Bautista Burke with Nick Lachey's brother Drew

CHERYL Bautista Burke, a Fil-Am based in New York City, joins grand finalists in "Dancing with the Stars," seen live on Thursdays over US cable TV ABC 7.

Cheryl and her celebrity partner, singer Drew Lachey (Nick's brother) of the band 98 Degrees are among the four teams (picked out of 10) who will battle it out during the grand finals on Feb. 23. Cheryl and Drew scored high in tango, samba, *pasa doble*, quickstep and cha-cha.

The plucky Pinay grew up in San Francisco, California. Her mother Sherri Bautista Burke, a native of San Jose, Nueva Ecija, has been featured in "Good Morning America," as a successful Asian entrepreneur.

Cheryl, 22, started ballet lessons at age 4. At age 10, she discovered ballroom dancing and started training in standard dance and Latin. She started competing abroad at at age 13. She emerged champion at the 2005 World Cup Professional Rising Star.

REGINE Velasquez, Pops Fernandez, Zsa Zsa Padilla and Kuh Ledesma

Back in Greenhills

KUH Ledesma is back in Greenhills, San Juan, with Teatrino ("small theater") at the Promenade, the newest shopping and dining destination.

Teatrino is very similar to Ledesma's former place, Music Museum—but smaller, with a seating capacity of only 28, and therefore more intimate. The singer-entrepreneur adds, "It also has a bigger stage and a state-of-the-art sound and lighting system."

Teatrino formally opened last month with Ledesma onstage, with friends Zsa Zsa Padilla, Pops Fernandez and Regine Velasquez.

NICK Lachey and Jessica Simpson AP

Needy ex

LOS ANGELES—Nick Lachey is seeking spousal support from his divorcing wife Jessica Simpson, and he wants his jewelry back.

In court papers filed Friday in response to Simpson's Dec. 16 divorce filing, Lachey cited irreconcilable differences for the dissolution of the three-year marriage.

Lachey, 32, also asked for "miscellaneous jewelry and other personal effects," his earnings and accumulations from and after the date of separation and other, to be determined assets.

Lachey said he and Simpson, 25, separated Dec. 13, although she claims it was Nov. 23.

The couple, who starred in their own MTV reality show, "Newlyweds: Nick & Jessica," had no prenuptial agreement. Lachey, who gained fame as a member of the boy band 98 Degrees, had more earning power when the couple wed in October 2002. However, Simpson's fame skyrocketed during the marriage. The 25-year-old singer-actress reportedly earned more than $30 million last year. *AP*

Singing actors

LOS ANGELES—Hollywood stars Jeremy Irons, Scarlett Johansson and Ewan McGregor are among 14 actors who are breaking into song for an unusual celebrity-studded music album, producers said Wednesday.

The actors have agreed to explore their alternative talents on "Unexpected Dreams: Songs from the Stars," an album aimed at helping a musical education program of the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

"Lost in Translation" and "Match Point" star Johansson, 21, will sing the George and Ira Gershwin classic "Summertime," Scotsman McGregor will croon Sade's "The Sweetest Gift" and dramatic actor Irons will sing Bob Dylan's classic "To Make You Feel My Love."

Other stars taking part in the venture, to be recorded by Rhino Records, include Jennifer Garner, Eric McCormack, Lucy Lawless and John Stamos. *AFP*

EWAN McGregor

All the movies you want to see on the big screen
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starmall EDSA - SHAW
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3: Close To You
4: I Will Always Love You
5: New World

METROPOLIS ALABANG Star
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1: I Will Always Love You
2: Close To You
3: New World
4: Brokeback Mountain

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Every Tuesdays Thursdays Live Bands. Every Fridays Stand-Up Comedy at Mark's KTV Metropolis
Star In A Million Mall Tour - Feb. 20 Sunday Metropolis Alabang.

GREENHILLS CINEMAS
GREENHILLS SHOPPING CENTER, ORTIGAS AVENUE, GREENHILLS, SAN JUAN, METRO MANILA
THEATRE MALL GREENHILLS
a landmark reinvented!
NOW SHOWING
CINEMA 1 GOAL 11:20, 2:00, 4:40, 7:20, 10:00 GP
CINEMA 2 FIREWALL 11:40, 2:20, 5:00, 7:40, 10:20 PG13
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND EX
PROMENADE GREENHILLS
...a dinetertainment for all!
NOW SHOWING
CINEMA 3 AEON FLUX 11:15, 1:30, 3:45, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30 R13
CINEMA 4 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN 11:50, 2:50, 5:45, 8:40 R18
CINEMA 5 PINK PANTHER 10:40, 1:00, 3:20, 5:40, 8:00, 10:20 GP
TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR CINEMA INQUIRIES, CALL: 722 4496.

MUSIC MUSEUM
FEBRUARY 23, 2006 | JULIA CLARETE | 9:00PM
March 30, 2006 | RICO J. PUNO | 9:00PM

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PROMENADE GREENHILLS
TEATRINO NOW OPEN NIGHTLY
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722-4532 LOC 116
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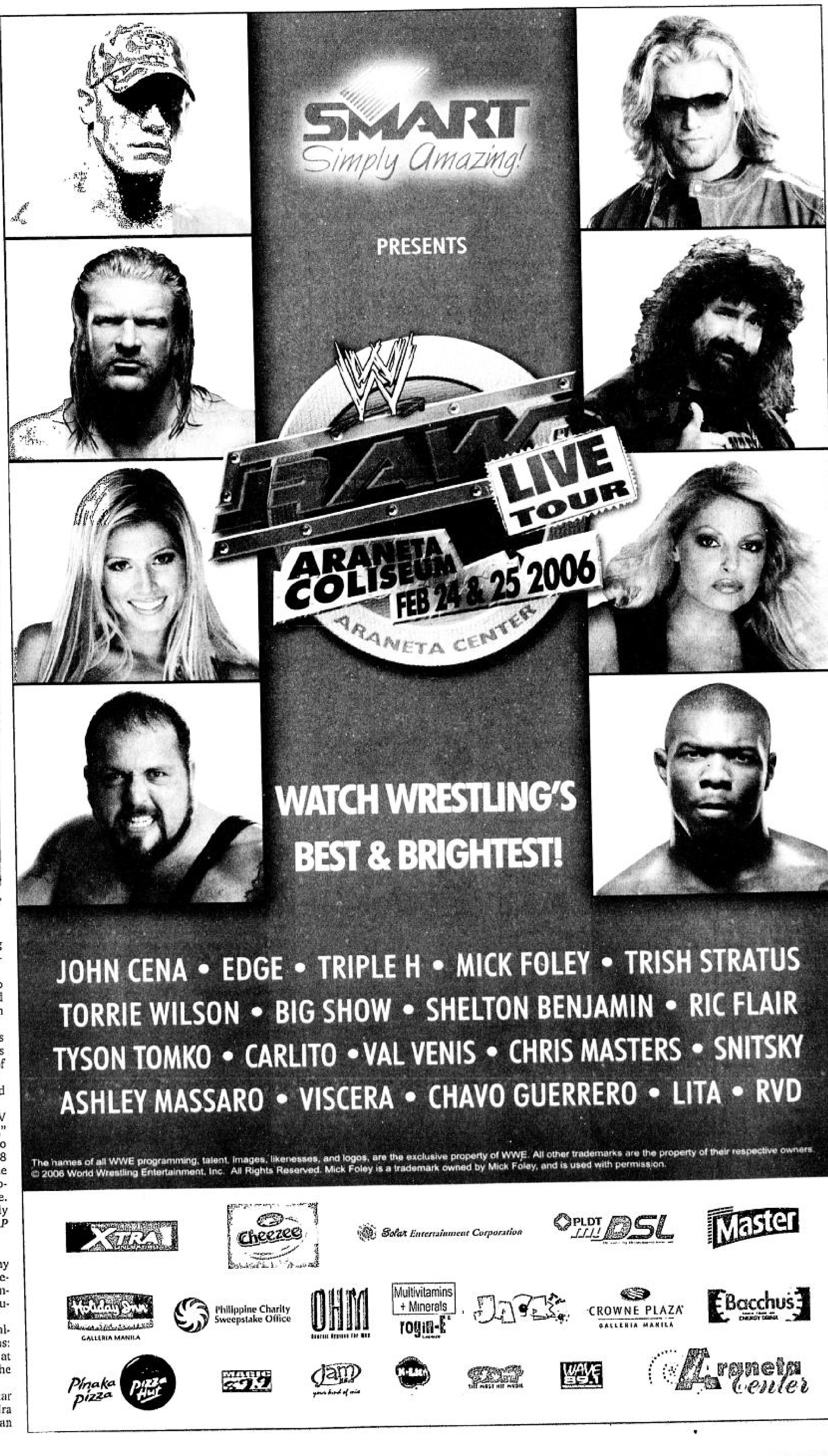
SMART
Simply Amazing!
PRESENTS
RAW LIVE TOUR
ARANETA COLISEUM FEB 24 & 25 2006
ARANETA CENTER
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JOHN CENA • EDGE • TRIPLE H • MICK FOLEY • TRISH STRATUS
TORRIE WILSON • BIG SHOW • SHELTON BENJAMIN • RIC FLAIR
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ASHLEY MASSARO • VISCERA • CHAVO GUERRERO • LITA • RVD
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Bacchus
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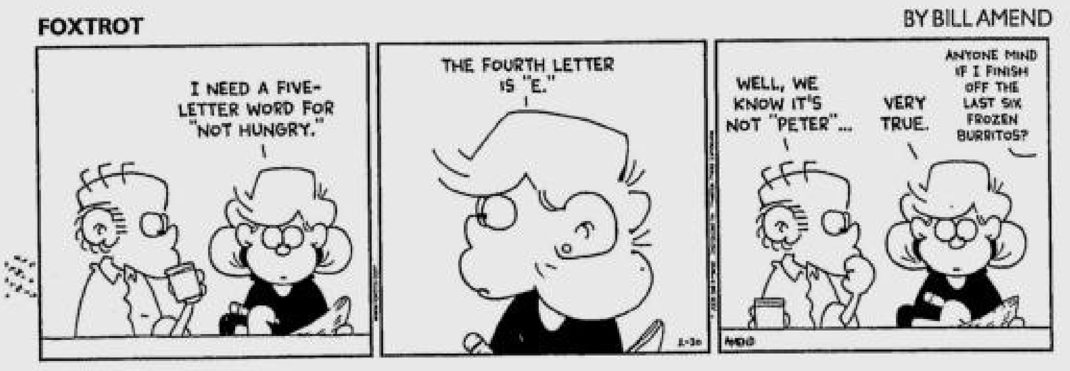
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

ComicRelief

e-mail feedback at arts@inquirer.com.ph

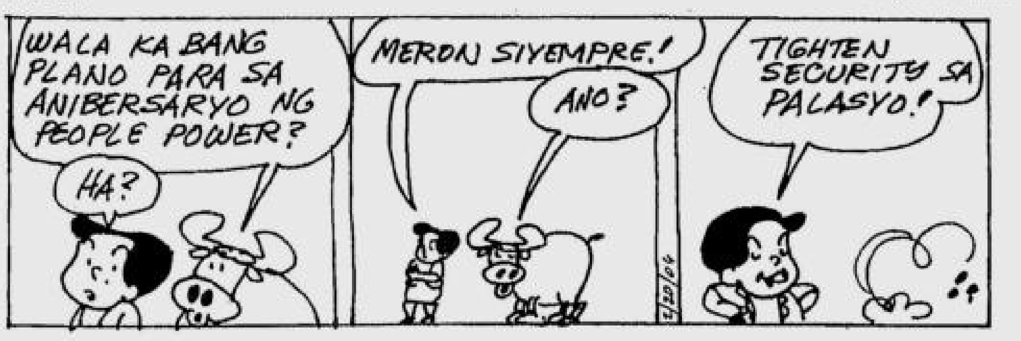
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


I NEED A FIVE-LETTER WORD FOR "NOT HUNGRY."
THE FOURTH LETTER IS "E."
WELL, WE KNOW IT'S NOT "PETER"...
VERY TRUE.
ANYONE MIND IF I FINISH OFF THE LAST SIX FROZEN BURRITOS?
2-20

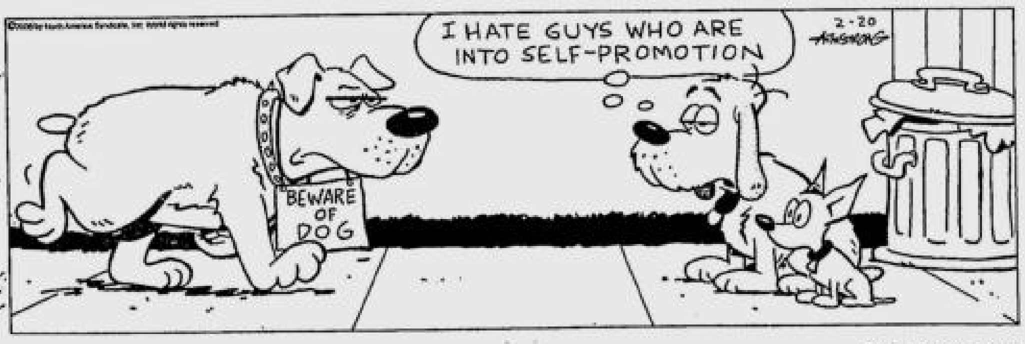
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


WALA KA BANG PLANO PARA SA ANIBERSARYO NG PEOPLE POWER?
HA?
MERON SIYEMPRE!
ANO?
TIGHTEN SECURITY SA PALASYO!
2/20/06

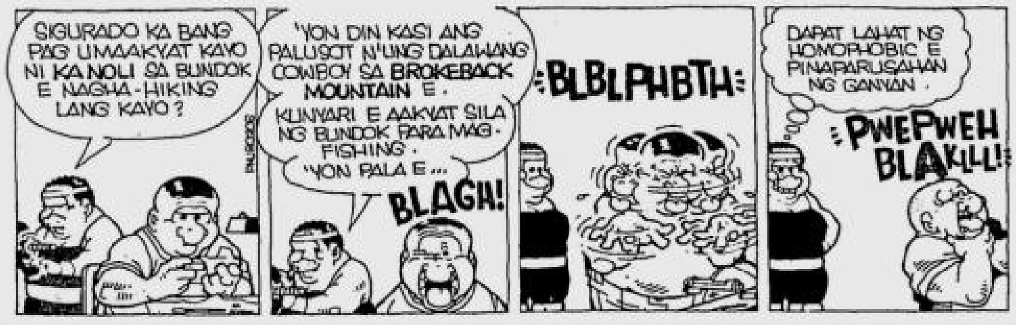
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


I HATE GUYS WHO ARE INTO SELF-PROMOTION
BEWARE OF DOG
2-20

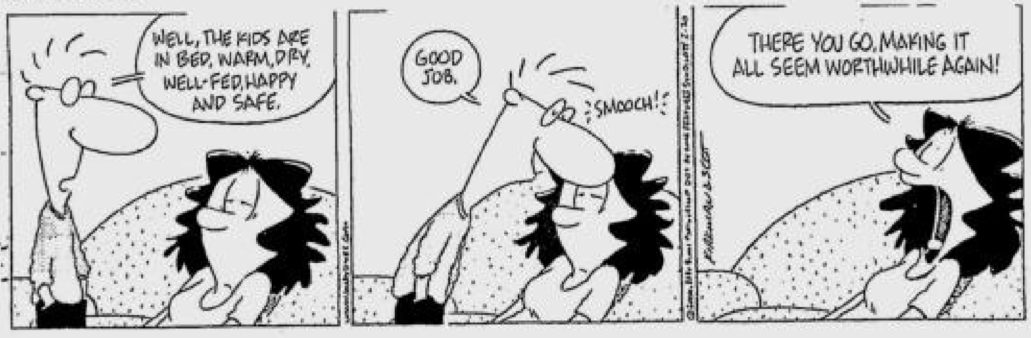
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


SIGURADO KA BANG PAG UMAAKYAT KAYO NI KA NOLI SA BUNDOK E NAGHA-HIKING LANG KAYO?
'YON DIN KASI ANG PALUSOT N'UNG DALAWANG COWBOY SA BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN E. KUNYARI E AAKYAT SILA NG BUNDOK PARA MAG-FISHING. 'YON PALA E...
BLAGH!
BLBLPHBTH
DAPAT LAHAT NG HOMOPHOBIC E PINAPARUSAHAN NG GANYAN.
PWEPWEH BLAKILL!

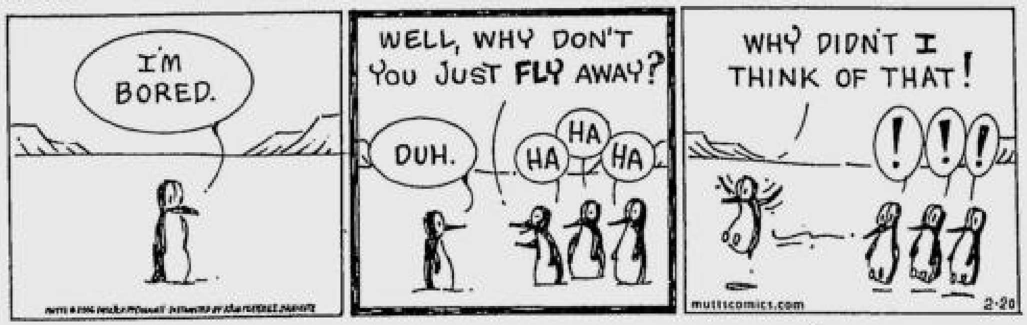
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


WELL, THE KIDS ARE IN BED, WARM, DRY, WELL-FED, HAPPY AND SAFE.
GOOD JOB.
SMOOCH!
THERE YOU GO, MAKING IT ALL SEEM WORTHWHILE AGAIN!

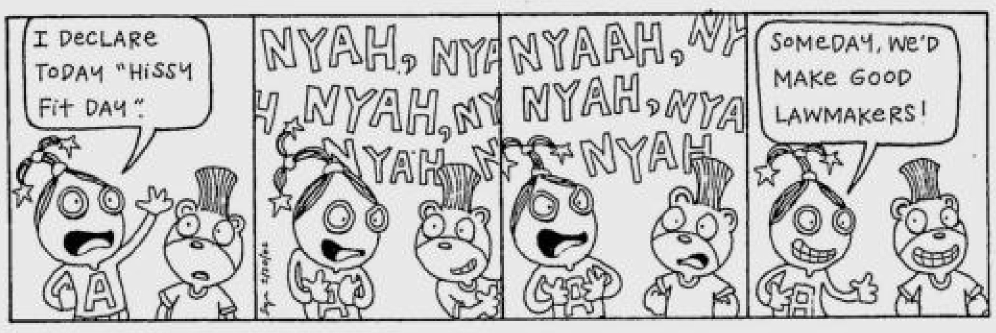
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


I'M BORED.
WELL, WHY DON'T YOU JUST FLY AWAY?
DUH.
HA
HA
HA
WHY DIDN'T I THINK OF THAT!
!
!
!
muttscomics.com
2-20

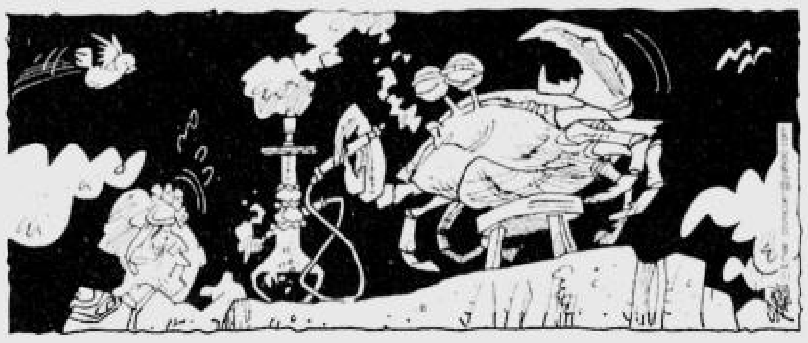
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


I DECLARE TODAY "HISSY FIT DAY".
NYAH, NYAH, NYAH, NYAH
NYAAH, NYAH, NYAH
SOMEDAY, WE'D MAKE GOOD LAWMAKERS!

DIVINE COMEDY

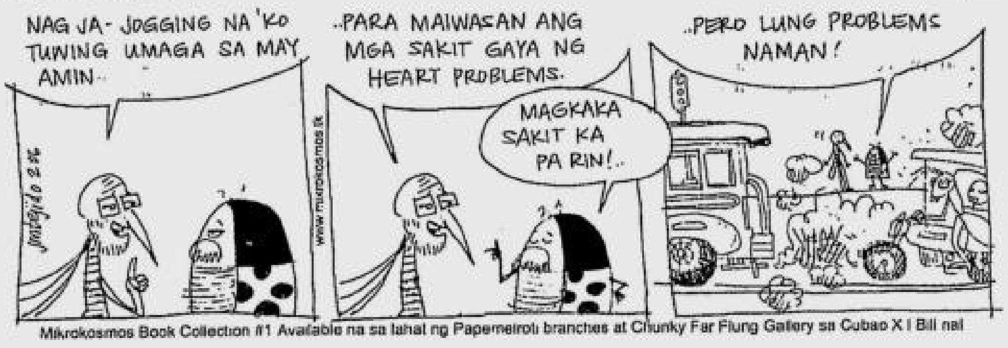
BY STEVEN PABALINAS



NATAGPUAN NG ISANG MOUNTAIN CLIMBER ANG TANGING PHILOSOPHER NA MAY HAWAK SA KASAGUTAN KUNG ANO ANG "MEANING OF LIFE." KASO NGA LANG, SYA AY ISANG DAMBUHALANG ALIMASAG NA HUMIHITIT NG OPIUM....

MIKROKOSMOS

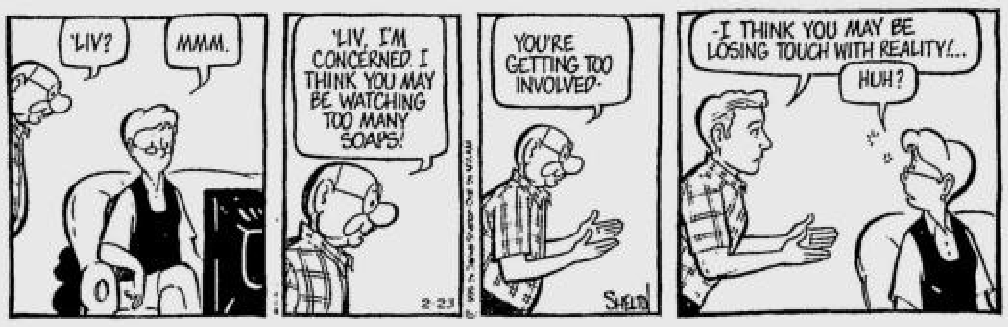
BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


NAG JA-JOGGING NA 'KO TUWING UMAGA SA MAY AMIN..
..PARA MAIWASAN ANG MGA SAKIT GAYA NG HEART PROBLEMS.
MAGKAKA SAKIT KA PA RIN!..
..PERO LUNG PROBLEMS NAMAN!

Mikrokosmos Book Collection #1 Available na sa lahat ng Papemelroti branches at Chunky Far Flung Gallery sa Cubao X I Bili na!

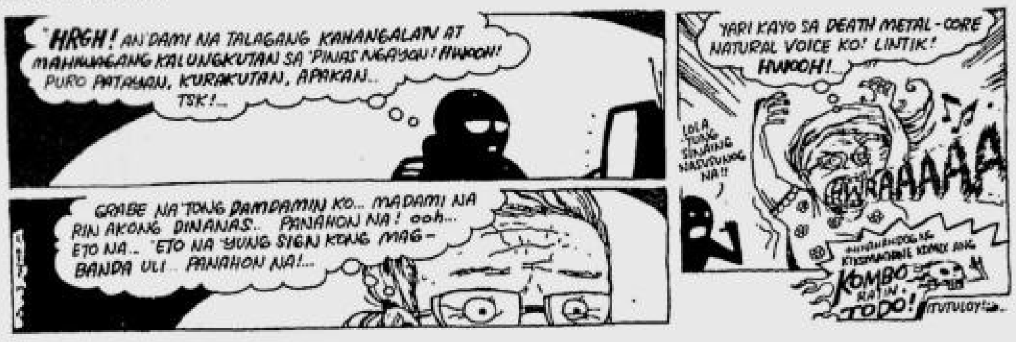
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


'LIV?
MMM.
'LIV, I'M CONCERNED. I THINK YOU MAY BE WATCHING TOO MANY SOAPS!
YOU'RE GETTING TOO INVOLVED.
-I THINK YOU MAY BE LOSING TOUCH WITH REALITY!...
HUH?
2-23

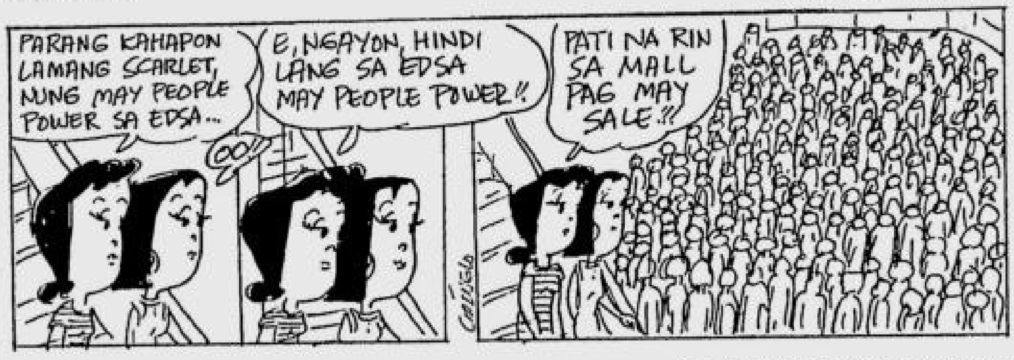
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


HRGH! AN'DAMI NA TALAGANG KAHANGALAN AT MAHAHABAG KALUNGKUTAN SA 'PINAS NGAYON! HWOOH! PURO PATAYAN, KURAKUTAN, APAKAN.. TSK!...
GRABE NA 'TONG DAMDAMIN KO... MADAMI NA RIN AKONG DINANAS.. PANAHON NA! ooh... ETO NA.. ETO NA 'YUNG SIGN KONG MAG-BANDA ULI.. PANAHON NA!...
YARI KAYO SA DEATH METAL-CORE NATURAL VOICE KO! LINTIK! HWOOH!
LOLA, 'YONG SINAING NASUSUNOG NA!!
RAAAAA
KOMBO RATIN TODO!
ITUTULOY!

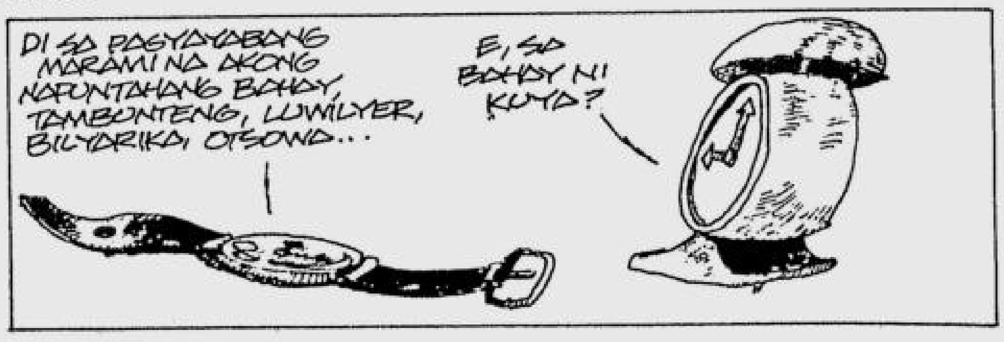
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


PARANG KAHAPON LAMANG SCARLET, NUNG MAY PEOPLE POWER SA EDSA...
OO!
E, NGAYON, HINDI LANG SA EDSA MAY PEOPLE POWER!!
PATI NA RIN SA MALL PAG MAY SALE!!

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


DI SA PAGYAYABANG MARAMI NA AKONG NAPUNTAHANG BAHAY, TAMBONTENG, LUWILYER, BILYARIKA, OTSOWA...
E, SA BAHAY NI KUYA?

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're very aware of the impression you create on your audience. In turn, your surroundings make a strong impression on you. You're tuned in to everything. People enjoy your company because you are sensitive, gentle and cooperative with others. You will face an important choice this year that will take you in one direction or another. Choose wisely.

Birthdate of: Cindy Crawford, supermodel; Charles Barkley, NBA star; Andrew Shue, actor/soccer player.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): It's time to think about what you really want to do, no matter how old you are. You're a creative sign who needs to sing your song!

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Your mission, should you choose to accept it (and really, you have no choice), is to solidify your home base. Focus on home and real estate this year.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You're on the move again! Many of you will be changing jobs or residences this year. Small wonder, since your job scene is going to improve so much!

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Plan for a vacation this year. You have the best opportunity in more than a decade to enjoy pleasant times with children and to explore romance!

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You're embarking on a whole new venture. Some of you are still letting go and giving up things. Others are already on a new course.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): In the next two years, you will dismantle much of what you have created since 1994. Don't worry. It's time to get rid of what is no longer relevant in your life.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You have much to look forward to in the year ahead, because most of you will increase your earnings! Similarly, most of you will increase your expenses as well!

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Because lucky Jupiter is in your sign until December, this is your year of good luck and good fortune! The only downside is you could gain weight. Oops.

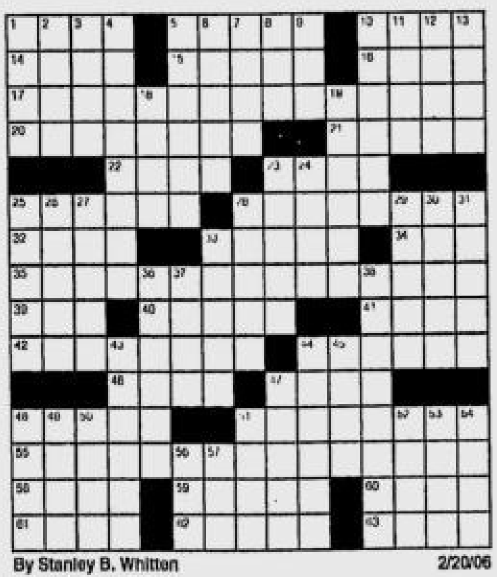
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): In about two years, you will enter a time of harvest, when the seeds you have planted will finally ripen. This year is a time of preparation for you.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19):7 Add something exciting to your wardrobe, because you have a popular year ahead! You want to feel good about yourself as you socialize with everyone. (You know that appearances count.)

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You can count on boosting your reputation and your good name this year. People will have increased respect for you, especially VIPs, bosses and parents.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Marvelous opportunities to travel or to expand your education in some way exist for you in 2006. Publishing, the media and everything having to do with medicine and the law are also favored.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Stanley B. Whitten
Highwood, IL

2/20/06

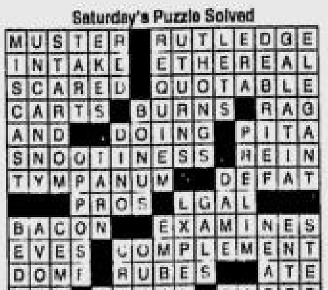
ACROSS

1 "Silent All These Years" singer Tori
5 Sumptuous repast
10 Fellow
14 Unit of force
15 Female vampire
16 Turner of films
17 Robert Frost poem
20 Chests
21 High points
22 Lump of dirt
23 Ex-mayor of NYC
25 Leakage stopper
28 Section titles
32 "Rule Britannia" composer Thomas
33 WWII hero Murphy
34 Gun lobby letters
35 Robert Frost poem
39 __ kwon do
40 Highland groups
41 Assessor's map
42 Plan of attack
44 Stick
46 Misplace
47 Crass
48 Temporary money
51 Firm
55 Robert Frost poem
58 Meat cut
59 Not tied down
60 Lena of "Chocolat"
61 Chooses
62 Beneath
63 Actress Foch

DOWN

1 Mine entrance
2 Legendary story
3 Not taken in by
4 Looker
5 Bending muscle
6 Facilitated
7 Latin 101 verb
8 Part of RSVP
9 Russian chess master
10 Bell-like bonnet
11 Cause damage to
12 Feed the kitty
13 Football or craps option
18 Crinkly veggie
19 Fragrant sack
23 Acclaim
24 Final bio?
25 Units of power
26 Enlightened Buddhist
27 Look down one's nose
28 Bright
29 Leg joint
30 Bleak
31 A votre __!
33 Saying
36 Squid kin
37 Pub beers
38 Orbit's most distant point from the sun
43 Accurately orients
44 General George Armstrong __
45 Fragrance
47 Employ again
48 Town near Caen
49 Mince
50 Housing grp.
51 Crude cross
52 Citrus fruit
53 Dilute
54 Sicilian volcano
56 Winter bug
57 Avoirdupois unit

Saturday's Puzzle Solved



MUSTER■RUTLEDGE
INTAKE■ETHEREAL
SCARED■QUOTABLE
CARTS■BURNS■RAG
AND■■DOING■PITA
SNOOTINESS■REIN
TYMPANUM■■DEFAT
■■■PROS■LGAL■■■
BACON■■EXAMINES
EVES■COMPLEMENT
DOME■RUBES■■ATE
LIB■SISAL■BARER
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2/20/06

Stick . . .

From page A2-1

that FAP's only achievement is the annual Luna Awards, said Martinez. "Our mandate is to hand out awards, unify the guilds and professionalize the industry."

The controversy, he said, is proof that "a producer shouldn't serve as a presidential consultant because it leads to a conflict of interests."

As FAP director-general, he said, "I have nothing to lose or gain. I am not a producer; I am not a politician."

Palace probe

FAP chair Atty. Espiridion Laxa told INQUIRER Entertainment that the issue has reached Malacañang.

The FAP and the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) were invited to the Palace on Feb. 10 for an discussion with Atty. Ron Salo of the office of Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, said Laxa.

The MMDA, which is in charge of the MMFF, was represented by Rolly Josef, chief of staff of MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando.

"I look forward to a fair and equitable decision by Malacañang within the week because both sides have been heard," Laxa said.

Film industry leaders are expected to meet with President Macapagal-Arroyo today in Malacañang, according to Martinez and Ric Camaligan, vice chair of the Anti-Film Piracy Council and president of the National Cinema Association of the Philippines (NCAP).

Camaligan agreed with Laxa: "To resolve this issue, everyone needs to sit down and discuss it thoroughly. Perhaps we should invite Mr. Del Rosario to a dialogue with us. More than anything, the industry should be united, not divided, by this issue."

Michiko, 'Maxi' . . .

From page A2-1

films and Kinderfilmfest is the Berlinale's children's category, according to Michiko Yamamoto, scriptwriter.

Yamamoto said the Kinderfilmfest victories are twice as sweet because "it was a festival for children." She also scripted Maryo J. de los Reyes' "Magnifico," which topped the Kinderfilmfest in 2004.

"To think we just won in Rotterdam (tying with Japan's "The Lost Hum" for Best Asian Film, given by the Network for the Promotion of Asian Cinema, an association of critics)," said Yamamoto of "Maxi's" latest score.

"I'm so happy for the ["Maxi"] team. I've lost count of the number of times we've won. It feels great because it's ufo's first film."

Yamamoto received the Berlinale news around lunchtime in Manila on Saturday, via a text message from producer Raymond Lee, who was in Germany with director Auraeus Solito.

The Teddy comes with a cash prize of 3,000 euros ($3,571).

"We hope to use the cash prize to fund future projects, like 'Sarong Banggi [One Night].'"

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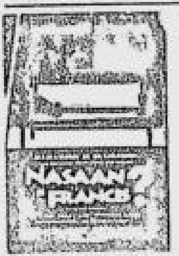

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2	AEON FLUX 02:15FS / 02:45 MF / 04:50 / 06:55 08:30 LFS / 09:00 LMF / 10:35 END	2	PINK PANTHER 11:20FS / 11:30 MF / 01:30 / 03:30 / 05:30 07:30 / 09:10 LFS / 09:30 LMF / 11:10 END
	MEGAMALL		
1	PINK PANTHER 11:15 FS / 11:35 MF / 01:10 / 03:45 / 06:50 07:55 / 09:30 LFS / 10:00 LMF / 11:30 END	3	MUNICH 12:00FS / 12:15 MF / 03:20 / 06:25 09:10 LFS / 09:30 LMF / 12:15 END

METRO MANILA

SM MEGAMALL
1 PINK PANTHER
2 GOAL
3 AEON FLUX
4 RESERVED
5 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
6 FIREWALL
7 UNDERWORLD 2
8 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
9 CLOSE TO YOU
10 NEW WORLD
11 MUNICH
12 CLOSE TO YOU

SM CITY STA. MESA
1 GOAL
2 AEON FLUX
3 PINK PANTHER
4 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
5 CLOSE TO YOU
6 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
7 FIREWALL
8 UNDERWORLD 2
9 NEW WORLD
10 SAW 2

SM CITY BICUTAN
1 AEON FLUX
2 CLOSE TO YOU
3 PINK PANTHER
4 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU

SM SUPERCENTER VALENZUELA
1 CLOSE TO YOU
2 CLOSE TO YOU
3 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
4 NEW WORLD

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
1 NEW WORLD
2 SAW 2
3 FIREWALL
4 CLOSE TO YOU
5 GOAL
6 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
7 AEON FLUX
8 PINK PANTHER
9 CLOSE TO YOU
10 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
11 UNDERWORLD 2
12 MUNICH

SM CITY SOUTHMALL
1 FIREWALL
2 PINK PANTHER
3 AEON FLUX
4 CLOSE TO YOU
5 CLOSE TO YOU
6 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
7 GOAL
8 NEW WORLD
9 SAW 2
10 RESERVED

SM SUPERCENTER SUCAT
1 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2 AEON FLUX
3 CLOSE TO YOU
4 PINK PANTHER

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
1 AEON FLUX
2 CLOSE TO YOU
3 GOAL
4 RESERVED
5 RESERVED
6 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
7 PINK PANTHER
8 FIREWALL

SM CITY MANILA
1 CLOSE TO YOU
2 NEW WORLD
3 SAW 2
4 AEON FLUX
5 PINK PANTHER
6 FIREWALL
7 CLOSE TO YOU
8 GOAL
9 CLOSE TO YOU
10 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
11 UNDERWORLD 2
12 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE

SM CITY SAN LAZARO
1 AEON FLUX
2 GOAL
3 PINK PANTHER
4 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
5 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
6 CLOSE TO YOU

LUZON

SM CITY PAMPANGA
1 PINK PANTHER
2 MUNICH
3 UNDERWORLD 2
4 CLOSE TO YOU
5 CLOSE TO YOU
6 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU

SM CITY BAGUIO
1 PINK PANTHER
2 GOAL
3 CLOSE TO YOU
4 UNDERWORLD 2

SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO
1 NEW WORLD
2 SAW 2
3 CLOSE TO YOU
4 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU

SM CITY BACOOR
GOAL
CLOSE TO YOU
PINK PANTHER
I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
FIREWALL
CLOSE TO YOU
NEW WORLD
MUNICH

SM CITY STA. ROSA
1 FIREWALL
2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 CLOSE TO YOU
4 PINK PANTHER

SM CITY MARILAO
1 BLOODRAYNE
2 CLOSE TO YOU
3 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
4 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2

SM CITY DASMARINAS
1 UNDERWORLD 2
2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 CLOSE TO YOU
4 PINK PANTHER

SM CITY LUCENA
1 BLOODRAYNE
2 CLOSE TO YOU
3 DERAILED
4 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU

SM CITY BATANGAS
1 UNDERWORLD 2
2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 CLOSE TO YOU
4 THE MAID

VISAYAS AND MINDANAO

SM CITY CEBU
1 FIREWALL
2 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
3 PINK PANTHER
4 MUNICH
5 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
6 BLOODRAYNE
7 CLOSE TO YOU
8 UNDERWORLD 2

SM CITY ILOILO
1 SAW 2
2 RESERVED
3 CLOSE TO YOU
4 PINK PANTHER
5 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
6 UNDERWORLD 2
7 RESERVED
8 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE

SM CITY DAVAO
1 SAW 2
2 CLOSE TO YOU
3 PINK PANTHER
4 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
5 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
6 CLOSE TO YOU

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO
1 UNDERWORLD 2
2 HALF LIGHT
3 CLOSE TO YOU
4 RUMOR HAS IT

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4.) The Chairman of the Council of Scientists
5.) The creator of "Aeon Flux" animated series
6.) The Captain of the Guard
7.) The leader of the rebellion
8.) The one responsible for the supervision of the Bregnan military

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GALLERIA 632-9116

1 MUNICH • THX
12:50 4:00 7:15 10:00

2 CLOSE TO YOU
12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00

3 GOAL
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

4 AEON FLUX
11:00 1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50

5 PINK PANTHER
11:00 1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50

6 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN
1:30 4:20 7:10 10:00

7 FIREWALL
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

8 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

9 NEW WORLD
1:45 4:30 7:15 10:00

10 FUN with DICK and JANE
1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12

1 CLOSE TO YOU
10:30 12:50 3:10 5:30 7:50 10:00

2 FUN with DICK and JANE 12:00 2:20
NEW WORLD 4:45 7:15 9:50

3 GOAL
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

4 AEON FLUX
12:20 2:20 4:20 6:20 8:20 10:00

5 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

6 PINK PANTHER
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00

7 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00

METRO EAST 682-8193 • 682-8199

1 FUN with DICK and JANE
12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00

2 CLOSE TO YOU
11:15 1:45 4:15 6:45 9:15

3 NEW WORLD
12:40 3:20 6:10 9:00

4 GOAL
11:20 1:40 4:00 6:30 9:00

5 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN
12:55 3:10 6:05 9:00

6 FIREWALL
12:40 2:45 4:50 6:55 9:00

7 PINK PANTHER
11:45 2:05 4:25 6:45 9:05

8 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
1:20 3:55 6:30 9:05

NOVALICHES 935-3231 / 935-3229-30

1 AEON FLUX
2 GOAL
3 FIREWALL
4 PINK PANTHER
5 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
6 CLOSE TO YOU
7 FUN with DICK and JANE

CITISQUARE MALABON 288-2575

1 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2 CLOSE TO YOU
3 RESERVE
4 RESERVE

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1 AEON FLUX
2 PINK PANTHER
3 CLOSE TO YOU
4 GOAL

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1 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2 SAW 2
3 UNDERWORLD 2
4 PINK PANTHER
5 CLOSE TO YOU

LIPA (043) 757-3664 (043) 312-5870

1 BLOODRAYNE
2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 WALK THE LINE
4 CLOSE TO YOU
5 SAW 2

DASMARIÑAS (046) 852-2126 (046) 416-4332

1 UNDERWORLD 2
2 MUNICH
3 CLOSE TO YOU
4 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
5 PINK PANTHER

ANGELES (045) 892-2348

1 UNDERWORLD 2
2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 CLOSE TO YOU
4 PINK PANTHER

IMUS (046) 875-3838 (046) 471-8188

1 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2 MUNICH
3 UNDERWORLD 2
4 PINK PANTHER
5 CLOSE TO YOU
6 GOAL

STARMILLS (045) 875-1927 (045) 961-5270

1 FIREWALL
2 CLOSE TO YOU
3 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
4 UNDERWORLD 2
5 PINK PANTHER
6 MUNICH

BACOLOD (034) 441-0453 (034) 441-0459

1 BLOODRAYNE
2 PINK PANTHER
3 CLOSE TO YOU
4 FUN with DICK and JANE
5 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
6 SAW 2

ILOILO (033) 336-8070

1 UNDERWORLD 2
2 PINK PANTHER
3 CLOSE TO YOU
4 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
5 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN
6 SAW 2

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Show biz challenge for champ

By Nini Valera

A MONTHLY ALLOWANCE, EDUcational expenses and a trust fund—Manny Pacquio is willing to give these to the boy that Joanna Bacosa says is their son.

"I just want to make that clear," Pacquiao told INQUIRER Entertainment even if his lawyer, Jose Crisostomo Jr., and two marketing consultants, Relly de Leon and Jake Joson, tried to stop him from talking about the matter.

But the three allowed Pacquiao to discuss his show biz career. The boxing champ has signed up with FLT Films International for a bio pic—except that the boxer, now a multi-millionaire, invested back into the project what would have been the payment for his story.

He refused to say how much this was, but apparently the price was much higher than his P700,000 talent fee for starring in a movie last year, "Lisensyadong Kamao," with sexy actresses Juliana Palermo and Aubrey Miles.

Pacquiao hand-picked actor Jericho Rosales to portray him in the FLT movie simply titled, "Pacquiao." He explained his choice: "Jericho knows boxing."

Difficult

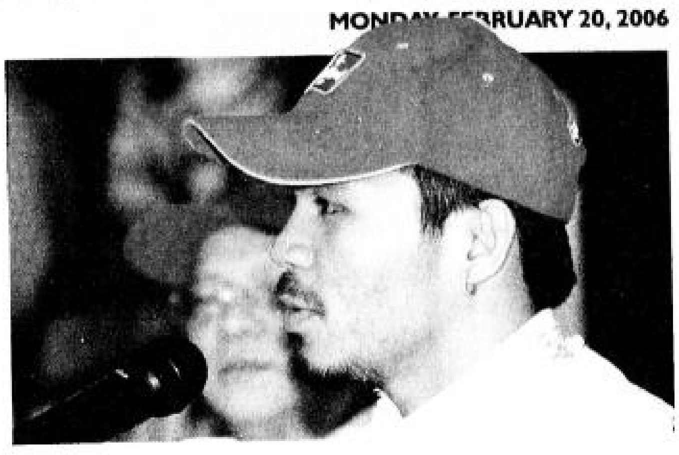
In an exclusive interview, Pacquiao told INQUIRER, "It's difficult to be in both show biz and in sports."

He is set to make two other movies, a fantasy film and a romantic comedy.

In a separate interview, "Pacquiao" director Joel Lamangan said the bio pic will not be treated as an ordinary boxing film. "It has to reflect the social and cultural makeup of the place where he grew up and which shaped his mind, and which now needs a hero like him."

At the same time, the director said, "This hero will not be a caricature on a monument; he will also be human."

Pacquiao is human.



MANNY Pacquiao

He complained of lack of sleep to INQUIRER Entertainment during the interview.

"I only have two hours of sleep a day, at the most," he said. He admitted that he missed going to the mall and that his wife has complained about his not having enough time for the family.

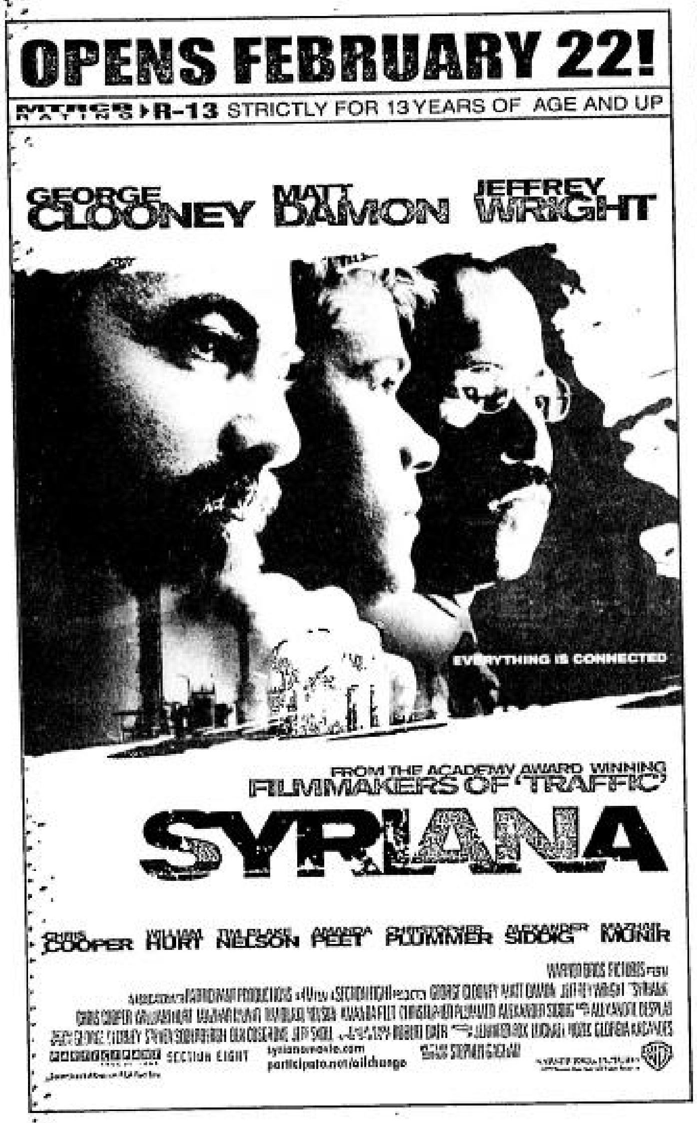
"Maybe, when I'm no longer a boxer, I can make it up to her," he said.

And what would he be if he were no longer a boxer? "I could be a movie producer, maybe," he said.

Pacquiao could also be a comedian. Asked who his favorite actor was, he said, "Eddie."

Eddie who? Garcia?

"*E, di ako,*" Pacquiao said with glee.



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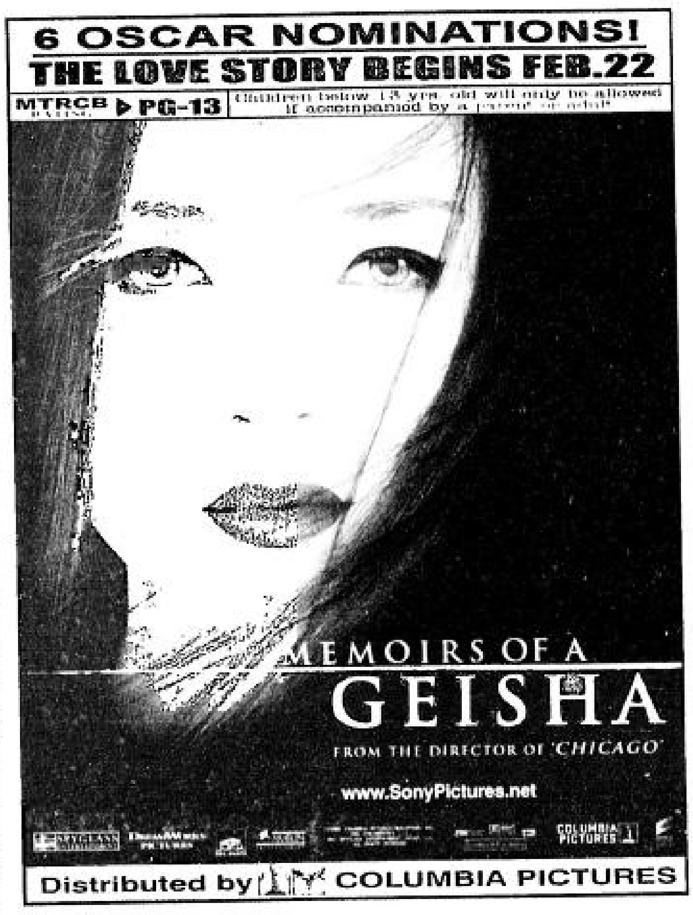

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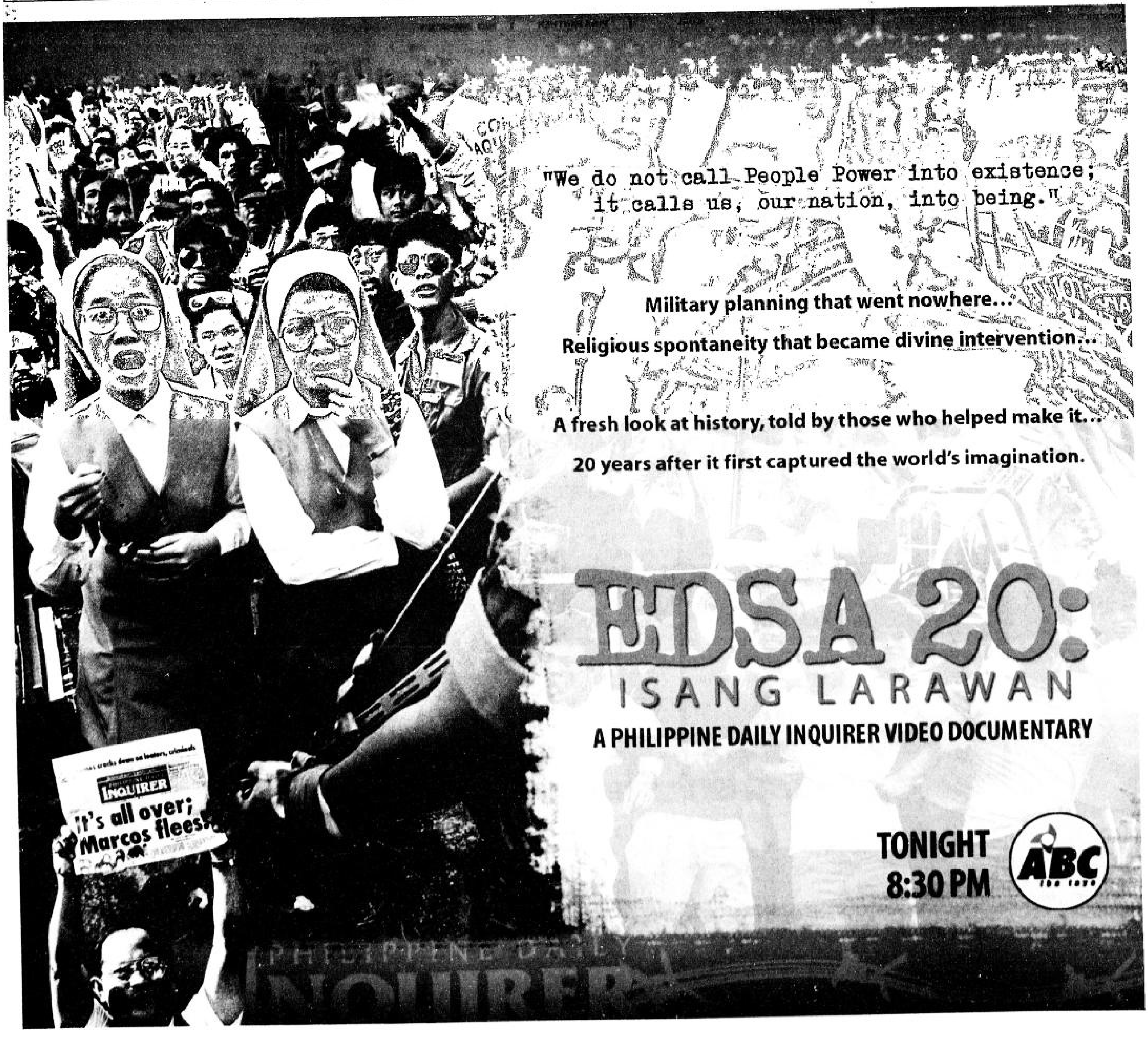

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Upbeat developments on the Filipino film front

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

SOME PEOPLE THINK I'M A COCKEYED OPtimist for stubbornly declaring that, despite the Filipino movie industry's poor showing last year, we're in for better film times in 2006.

Well, early evidence may prove us right. Here it is, only February, and Star Cinema has already released two new films.

If the studio keeps this pace up, it could come out with one new movie each month, totaling 12 for 2006—from one movie company alone. That's a lot, especially when compared with last year's meager output.

One of the big movies that Star Cinema is heralding is the film bio of boxing idol **Manny Pacquiao**, with **Jericho Rosales** protraying the title role. The film will be co-produced by FLT.

Other studios' productions that have been announced include a **Camille Prats** starrer and an "Agent X-44"'s spoof for **Vhong Navarro**.

Regal Entertainment is also revving up for a busy year. Its first movie for 2006, "I will Always Love You," is reported to have grossed P50M on its first week, which makes it a certified hit.

Other Regal movies in the works include **Katrina Halili**'s launching vehicle as a sexy star, which the studio is co-producing with GMA Films.

Co-productions seem to be the way to go this year, after their success in the 2005 Metro filmfest.

This is one way that cash-strapped producers can bankroll expensive productions that will draw viewers back to theaters showing local movies.

But budget productions can still be expected to dominate the local filmmaking scene, as the digital trend continues to generate more adherents.

The 2006 Cinemalaya alternative filmfest has already chosen the digital feature projects that will each be given a seed grant of P500,000 for showing by the middle of the year.

And the Cinema One movie channel will fund seven more digital features, with a total production grant of P700,000 each. This year, the channel is looking for movies about the Filipino family.

These upbeat developments show that there are enough people out there who haven't resigned themselves to melodramatically and mawkishly mourning the "death" of Filipino movies, and are prepared to work hard to help energize them back to dynamic life.

Why not join this more upbeat group by supporting their efforts with your patronage?

Even if you don't like some of the local films you watch, your consistent patronage —and constructive criticism—will be important components in the Filipino movie industry's long-awaited "resurrection."

Catherine Deneuve

It's great to hear that the 2006 Bangkok International Film Festival (Feb. 17-27) will honor French actress **Catherine Deneuve** with its Golden Kinnaree Career Achievement Award for her contribution to cinema.

The presentation will be made during the festival's Award Gala on Feb. 24 at the Conrad Hotel.

Deneuve is known for her work with international film directors. She came to worldwide prominence in 1964 in **Jacques Dewey's** "The Umbrellas of Cherbourg." The film will be screened at the Bangkok filmfest in a special festival presentation on Feb. 21.

Nominated for an Academy Award in 1992 for performance in "Indochina," **Deneuve** has won France's Cesar Award for "The Last Metro" and "Indochina." Bafta also honored her work as Best Actress in **Luis Buñuel's** 1967 masterpiece, "Belle de Jour."

Deneuve's other exceptional movies include "Repulsion" by **Roman Polanski**, "Tristana" by **Buñuel**, "Mississippi Mermaid" by **Francois Truffaut**, and "Dancer in the Dark" by **Lars von Trier**.

Liberated and independent in her private live, **Deneuve** had a child by **Roger Vadim** in 1963 and another by **Marcello Mastroianni** in 1972, but did not marry either one of them. Her marriage to British photographer **David Bailey** ended in divorce.

Even in her 60s, **Deneuve** is an exquisite beauty, aloof and detached in manner, but vital in some of her films. She was particularly effective as the frigid, mentally disoriented character in "Repulsion," the conniving 18th-century virgin in "Benjamin," and the erotic, enigmatic protagonist in "Belle de Jour" and "Tristana."

SHANG CINEPLEX

① PINK PANTHER
MTRCB GP
12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10.00

② AEON FLUX
MTRCB R-13
12 00, 2 30, 5 00, 7 30, 10 00

③ EIGA SAI 2006
2 00, 5.00, 8.00

④ BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN
MTRCB R-18
1 00, 3 40, 6 20, 9 00

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MTRCB PG-13 12 45, 2 50 4 55 / MTRCB GP 7:30, 10.00
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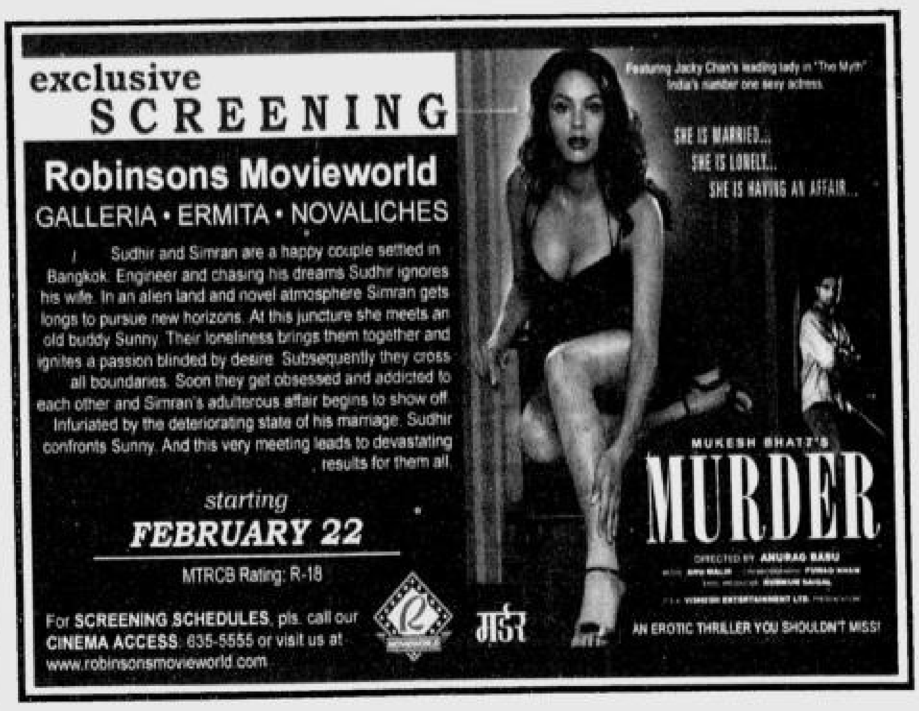

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GUARANTEED SEATS
MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

1 BROKE BACK MOUNTAIN
11:00, 1:55, 4:50, 7:45, 10:40
R-18

2 PINK PANTHER
1:40, 4:00, 6:20, 8:40, 11:00
GP

3 AEON FLUX
1:05, 3:35, 6:05, 8:35, 11:00
R-13

4 GOAL
1:10, 3:40, 6:10, 8:35, 11:00
GP

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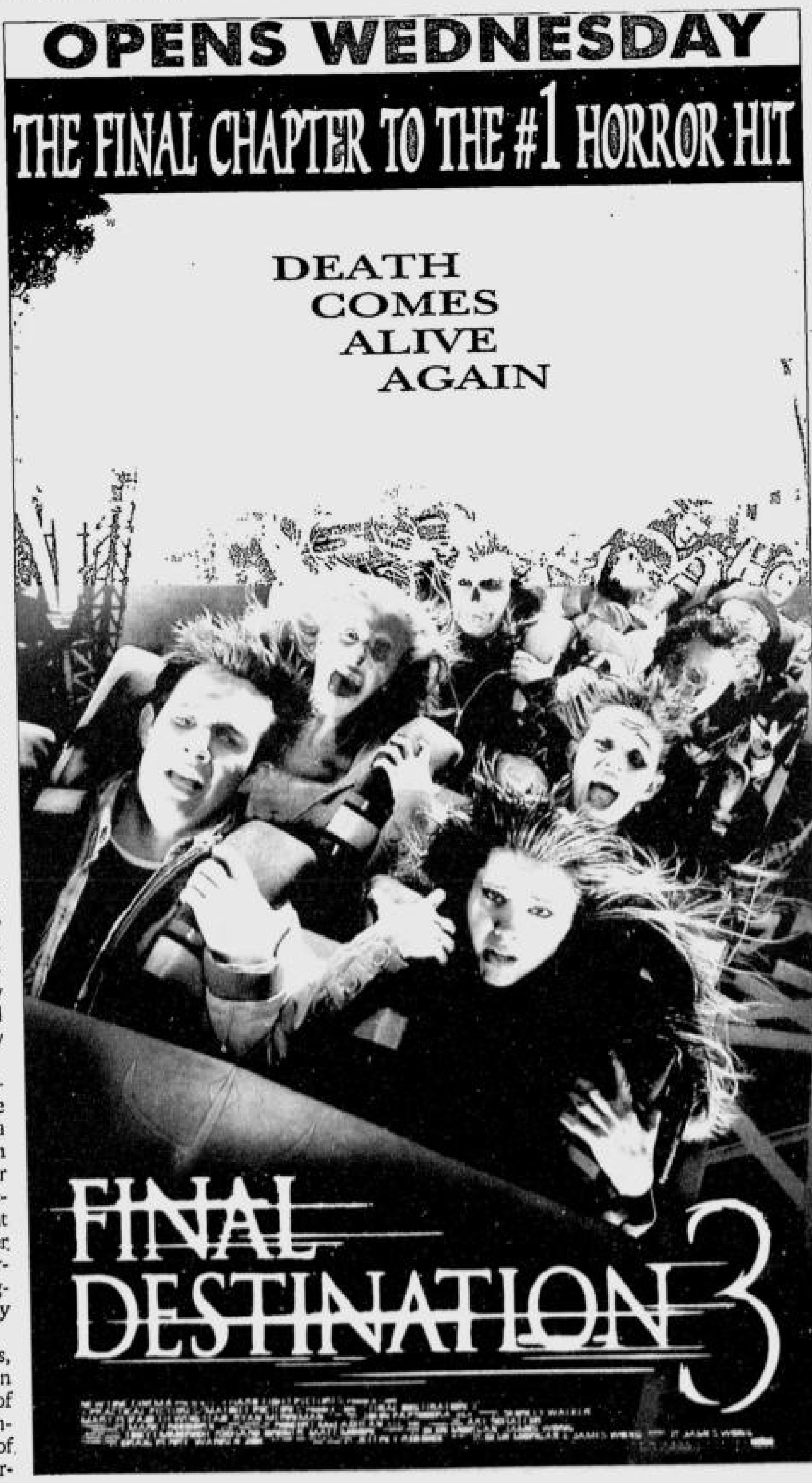
AEON FLUX R13 1:35,3:45,5:55, 8:05,10:15	FIREWALL PG13 12:10,2:35	CLOSE TO YOU GP 12:40,3:00,5:20, 7:40,10:00
BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN R18 2:20,5:00,7:40,10:20	GOAL GP 12:15,2:45,5:15, 7:45,10:15	PINK PANTHER GP 1:35,3:45,5:55, 8:05,10:15

Matinee Screenings before 5:00 p.m. "Free Seating" P111.00 ~ Monday-Friday.



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MOVIE GUIDE
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SHANG CINEPLEX
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1 (DOLBY) PINK PANTHER GP
2 (DOLBY) AEON FLUX R13
3 (DOLBY) EIGA SAI 2006
4 (DOLBY) BROKE BACK MOUNTAIN R18
PREMIERE
(DOLBY) FUN WITH DICK & JANE / GOAL PG13 / GP

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
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1 (DDS) MUNICH
2 (SDDS) FUN W/ DICK & JANE
3 (DTS) FIREWALL
4 GOLD (DTS) PINK PANTHER
5 GOLD (DOLBY) BROKE BACK MOUNTAIN
6 GOLD (SDDS) GOAL
7 GOLD (DOLBY) AEON FLUX
8 CLOSE TO YOU
9 CLOSE TO YOU
10 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU

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1 (DOLBY) BROKE BACK MOUNTAIN
2 (DOLBY) PINK PANTHER
3 (DOLBY) AEON FLUX
4 (DOLBY) GOAL

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Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
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2 (DTS) CLOSE TO YOU
3 (DOLBY) UNDERWORLD-2
4 PINK PANTHER

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Binan) tel. (049) 4111146
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2 (DOLBY) UNDERWORLD-2
3 (DTS) PINK PANTHER
4 CLOSE TO YOU

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
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2 CLOSE TO YOU
3 (DOLBY) ST. ANGIE

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
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2 CLOSE TO YOU
3 (DOLBY) DERAILED
4 (DTS) SAW-2

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(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320
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2 CLOSE TO YOU
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Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan)
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2 (DOLBY) I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
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4 (DOLBY) RESERVED

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2 AEON FLUX
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4 CLOSE TO YOU
5 BROKE BACK MOUNTAIN

starmall EDSA-SHAW
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3 THE NEW WORLD
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) CLOSE TO YOU
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metropolis star cinema
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(ALABANG) tel. 8504285, 5433994
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3 CLOSE TO YOU
4 THE NEW WORLD

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Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue
(Baguio City) tel (074)- (4449346)
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N. Pacific Mall Cabanatuan, telephone No (044) 600-3025
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2 CLOSE TO YOU
3 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
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3 (DTS EX) CLOSE TO YOU
4 UNDERWORLD

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(Pasig) tel 640.4748
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Lianas MovieCity
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4 (DTS) RESERVED

Cine Nepo
(Dagupan City) tel (075) 515.8409
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3 (DOLBY) ST. ANGIE
4 (DTS) WALK THE LINE / MR. SMITH

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2 ZATHURA

Fiesta World Mall
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1 BLOODRAYNE
2 CLOSE TO YOU
3 SAW-2
4 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 SAW-2
2 THE FRUIT IS SWELLING

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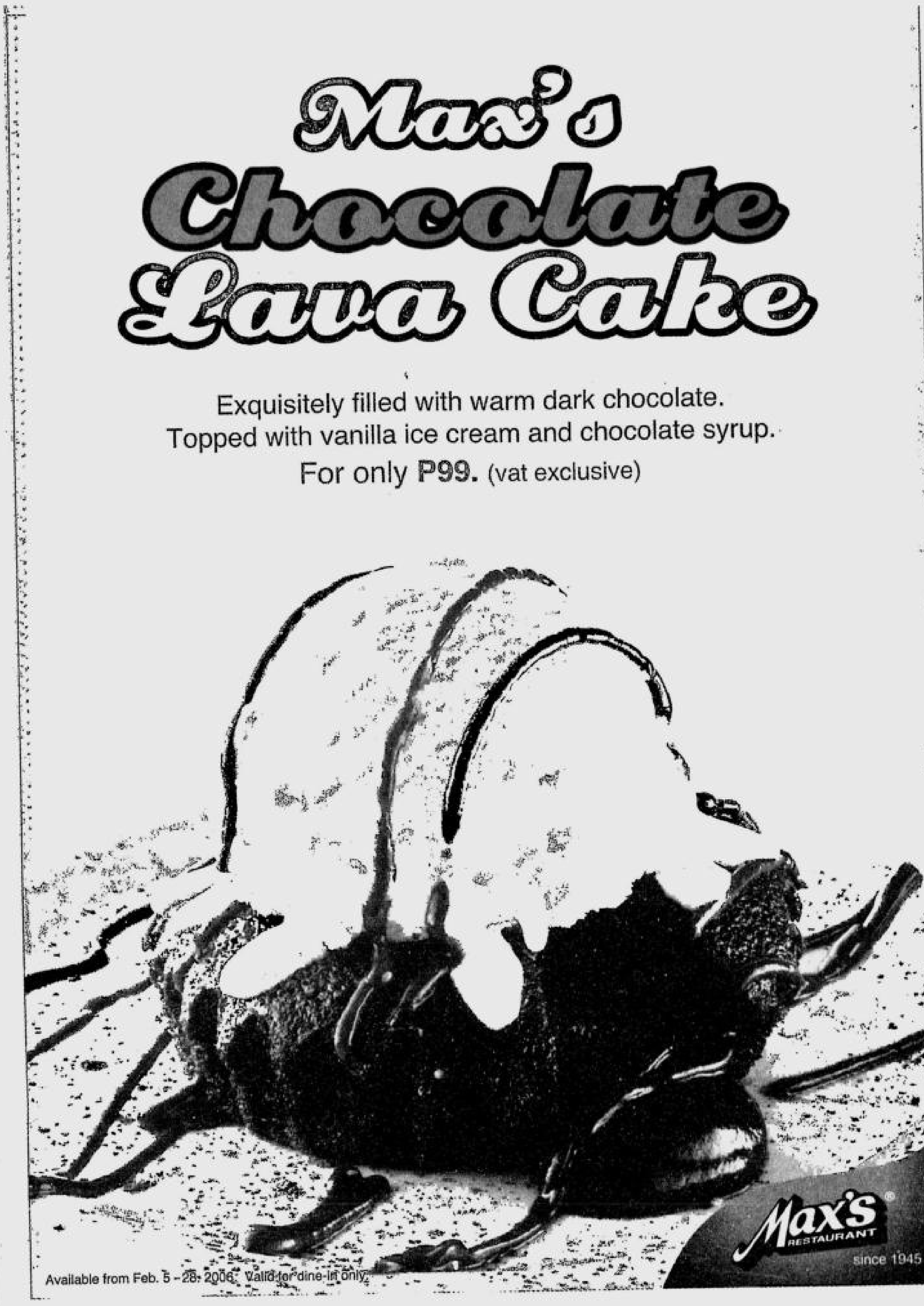
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Funny 'Mega Valentine'

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

STAND-UP COMEDY could very well be Sharon Cuneta's next stop.

Throughout "My Mega Valentine," her Feb. 12 concert at the Araneta Coliseum, the multi-media artist dispensed snappy one-liners, largely unscripted and unrehearsed, mostly self-deprecating.

No one, nothing was spared—from her fluctuating weight to former partner Robin Padilla, who made an unexpected entrance from his seat in the bleachers.

Cuneta even took on audience member Manny Pacquiao, alluding to the controversy in the boxing champ's love life: "Boys will be boys…"

"Only Sharon can get away with this," quipped guest Kuh Ledesma, who designed one of Cuneta's gowns. At one point, Ledesma pinned Mega's skirt in place, right in front of the 10,000-strong audience.

Eye candy

With the two divas around, performers Christopher de Leon and Christian Bautista were reduced to eye candy for the women in the audience.

Musical director Louie Ocampo's arrangments were slick, the better to emphasize the star's emotive skills.

Because the last time she performed at the Big Dome was four years ago ("The Mega Event"), Cuneta obviously relished the OPM (Original Pilipino Music) numbers.

Highlights were the Ocampo ballad "Paalam," the Ryan Cayabyab duet with Ledesma ("Kahit Ika'y Panaginip," "Paraisong Parisukat" and "Magbalik Ka Na, Mahal"), a heartfelt "Ikaw" (with harpist Noelle Cassandra), "Bituing Walang Ningning" and, as encore, the Sharonians' anthem, "Sana'y Wala Nang Wakas."

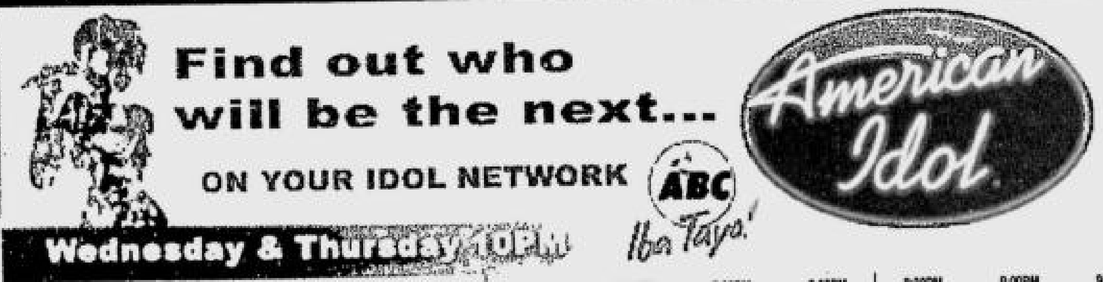
Yet another peculiarity of a Cuneta concert is the star going down the stage to join the crowd, which she did at the start of the show, much to the consternation of the coliseum security.

At concert's end, the crowd, expecting Cuneta to do it again, rushed to the front, toting cameras. She didn't descend the stage again, but one enterprising audience member managed to pass on a gift.

This might not happen in other concerts, but for Sharonians it was just another night with their idol.

The good news is, there's talk of a repeat.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
TV GUIDE
Monday, February 20, 2006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Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABC 5			WNCAA (Rerun)		Speed		TNA Impact		Sentro	Friends	Guinness Book Of Records		Fear Factor		Big News	Tokoo TV		Billboard On-Air	
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema				Little Amy	Mr. Bean	Naruto	Amazing Twins	Meteor Garden Season 2	TV Patrol World	Gulong Ng Palad	Mga Anghel Na Walang Langit	Pinoy Big Brother	Princess Lulu	Forbidden Love	OK Fine Whatever			Insider
AXN		SWAT Police			Worst Case Scenario		E Buzz	Lost		24		Maximum Exposure (Season II)		The 4400 (Season 2)		Las Vegas		Las Vegas	
Cartoon Network	Johnny Bravo	Dexter's Laboratory	Tom & Jerry Show		Baby Looney Tunes	Codename Kids Next Door	Foster's Home For Imaginary Friends	The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy	Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	Power Rangers Wild Force	The Gransazers	Battle B-Daman	Energy Bomb	X-Men Evolution	Samurai Jack	Justice League	Static Shock	Power Rangers Wild Force	The Gransazers
Cinema One		Inday Bote				Mano Po 2			Another You	Hiot Pa Sa Buhay Ko				Soltero				Testigo	
Cinemax	Lara Croft: Tomb Raider The Cradle Of Life				Winning							Stop Or My Mom Will Shoot			Japanese Story (9:25PM)			Glass Trap (11:10PM)	
CNN				Business International		World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		Business International		World News Asia		World News	Living Golf	World News Asia		World News	World Sport
Discovery Channel		Quest For The Lost Pharaoh		Monster Garage		Man Made Marvels		I Survived		Wild Discovery		Japan's War In Colour		Superweapons Of The Ancient World		I Shouldn't Be Alive		New Detectives	
Disney Channel	Mr. Bean The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Art Attack/Unbelievable Bunny	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Lilo & Stitch	Sabrina The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr. Bean The Animated Series	That's So Raven	Wonderful World Of Disney			Black Hole High	So Little Time	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Chip N Dale's Rescue Ranger	Wonderful World Of Disney	
ESPN	Table Tennis '05 [illegible]	Pro Billiards '04 Sudden Death 7-Ball NV USA		World Pool Masters '01		Winter X Games Classic CO USA		Extreme Programming Sports Mania		In The Driver's Seat	Sportscenter Asia	Pro Billiards '05 BCA Open 9-Ball C'ships Finals		Table Tennis '04 [illegible] C'ships	LPGA Golf SBS Open @ Turtle Bay Hawaii 1st rd				Sportscenter Asia
ETC		Project Runway		Change of Heart	Elimidate	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	The Tyra Banks Show		Project Runway		Queer Eye For The Straight Guy		ET Weekend		Joan Of Arcadia	
EWTN	Benediction And Devotion Encore	Angelus (3:15PM)	Bible Treasure Chest	Image Of God	St. Thomas More Faithful Statesman	Rosary With Mother Angelica	Voices On Virtue	EWTN Gallery	The Catholic Faith & Vatican II	Sunday Night With (Encore) Fr. Benedict Groeschel		Threshold Of Hope		Daily Mass (SAP) Live		Angelus (10:15PM)	Defending Life	Catholic Compass	
Fox News		Fox Report Sunday		Beltway Boys	Fox News Watch	Bulls & Bears	Cavuto On Business	Forbes On Fox	Cashin' In	Fox & Friends						Fox News Live			
GMA 7	Kung Mamahalin Mo Lang Ako	Now and Forever	First Love Of A Royal Prince		Dragonball Z	Great Teacher Onizuka	La Robe de Mariage	24 Oras		Extra Challenge	My Name Is Kim Sam Soon	Ethola	Starstruck 3	Jewel In The Palace/Lagot Ka Isusumbong Kita			Saksi		
Hallmark Channel	Bewitched	Child Of Our Time		Murder Without Conviction			Who's The Boss? II	Bewitched	The Nanny	Strong Medicine		Judging Amy		Hercules			McLeod's Daughters IV		Strong Medicine
HBO	Peter Pan				Bulseye!			Before Sunset			Sinbad Legend Of The Seven Seas			Ocean's Twelve				Perfect Romance	
IBC 13		EZ Shop				Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Krusada Kontra Krimen		Home Shopping Network		ME TV		Japan Video Topics		Global Family Series	IBC News Tonite	Home Shopping Network	
JackTV	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	The Late Show David Letterman		Bottomline		Afterburn		X-Men Evolution	Beat The Geeks	Mad TV		That 70s Show	Arrested Development	The Late Show David Letterman		Jack In The Box			
Lifestyle Network	Country Style	Interiors By Design	Decorating With Style	Decorating Cents	Molto Mario	Sweet Dreams	30 Minute Meals	Bill Boggs Corner	Unwrapped	Food 911	E! Extra Jackie Collins Presents: Hitched In Hollywood		NY Fashion Week	Life & Style		Radical Sabbatical	Genuine Article	How Do I Look	
MTV Philippines	Rockola	Oasis Live Supersonic Milan	Chart Attack		Viva La Bam	Pop Inc		MTV Hits				Massive	Get Spotted	TRL		The 70's House	Wild N' Out	Homecoming	VH1 Video Collections
MYX		Rock MYX	My MYX	Mellow MYX	Urban MYX	Take 5	OPM MYX	MYX Firsts	Star MYX	MYXLOG	Pop MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten	-		Mobile MYX Top Picks	Urban MYX	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	OPM MYX
National Geographic	Wild Family Secrets	Hidden Worlds		Dangerous Encounters		Wildlife Diary	Totally Wild	Top 5 - Mysterious Universe		Wow!		About Asia		National Geographic Specials		Treasure Fleet: The Adventures Of Zheng He		Hornets, A Sting In The Tale	
NBN		Value Vision		New Life TV Shopping		Teledyaryo	[illegible] Ko, Mahal Mo Ba Siya?	Tinig ng Bayan (Live)				Teledyaryo				Dial M		Bantay OCW With Susan K	
Nickelodeon	Chalkzone			Four Eyes	My Life As A Teenage Robot	SpongeBob SquarePants	The Fairly Odd Parents	Drake & Josh	Naturally Sadie	Romeo	All That	All Grown Up	As Told By Ginger	Four Eyes	My Life As A Teenage Robot	The Adventures Jimmy Neutron	The Fairly Odd Parents	My Dad The Rock Star	
PBO			Bangers				Maging Akin Ka Lamang				Miguelito Ang Batang Rebelde				Marinong Bungo 2				Salot Sa Liguya
Qtv	Ikaw Lang Ang Mamahalin		[illegible] Hungry Heart	The Prince Of Tennis	MMS (My Music Station)		Moms		Love At Aegean Sea	Irene	Mars	Laugh To Laugh: Ang Kulit	H3O Hahaha...Oval		News On Q	Ugat Ng Kabataan		MINT (Music Interactive)	
RPN 9	TV Shopping		Defenders Of The Earth	Global Window				Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	Score Tactics	NBA On RPN					Newswatch Now	Just For Laughs (Gags)	Cargo For Truth	
SBN 21				New Life TV Shopping				Winner TV Shopping				Oras Ng Himala		Oras ng Katotohanan		SBN Music Video			
Solar Sports						Greatest Classics				Sagupaan		2006 NBA Legends Brunch					Sportsdesk	All-England Finals	
Sports Plus				Ultimate Fighting Championship Special						Arena Football League						The Ace Group Classic Final			
Star Movies	Jawbreaker (2:25PM)			Sonic Impact (3:55PM)			A Walk In The Clouds			Hollow Man (7:10PM)				Chariots Of Fire				The Dead Will Tell (11:10PM)	
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		General Hospital		Angel		The Simpsons	Malcolm In The Middle	Star News Asia	Friends (Series 10)	My Wife And Kids	Everybody Loves Raymond	Frasier (Series 9)		Monk (Series 4)		Friends (Series 10)	My Wife And Kids
Studio 23		Yugioh Duel Monster						Get Backers	Spirits	Wazzup Wazzup	The Swan Season 2		Charmed (8:20PM)	Lost (9:10PM)		News Central	The West Wing		Travel Time

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HSBC's fearless forecast: ₱47.50 to $1

Says sustained fiscal discipline to aid peso

By Michelle V. Remo

HONG KONG SHANGHAI BANKING CORP. (HSBC) SAID THE PESO could appreciate to below 50 to a dollar and even get a credit-rating upgrade before the end of the year if the government's positive fiscal performance in 2005 would be sustained.

Arnulfo Veloso, HSBC treasurer and head of global markets, said in an economic forum last week that the peso could hit 49.50 against the greenback toward June, and further strengthen to 47.50 in the fourth quarter if the government's revenue targets would be hit.

"Markets may price in a credit upgrade should fiscal numbers improve and should we have a stable political landscape," Veloso said during last Friday's Economic Review and Outlook for 2006 organized by the Management Association of the Philippines (MAP).

He said oil prices were not expected to be as volatile as last year because of the projected slowdown in the growth of the world economy that would dampen demand. The Philippines, which imports most of its oil requirements, is therefore not likely to experience pressures on its currency given the softening oil prices.

Last year, the Philippine government surprised many by posting a budget deficit of only P146.5 billion, way below the official target of P180 billion set for 2005.

The lower-than-programmed deficit was due to tightened spending and higher revenues collected from state-owned firms and investments of the Bureau of the Treasury in dollar-denominated sovereign bonds.

But Veloso said the positive fiscal performance last year should be sustained if the government wanted to finally get the elusive upgrade on the country's credit ratings and for the peso to strengthen and breach the 50-to-a-dollar mark.

HSBC'S/B2

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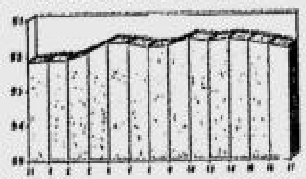
CURRENCIES



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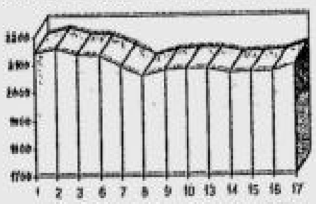


(See stock market report on Page B7)

Weak trade seen on interest worries

SHARE PRICES ARE EXPECTED TO REMAIN volatile this week with worries over the fate of US and local interest rates.

BPI Trade said in a weekly report that the

STOCKS/B3

WHAT'S INSIDE

Equitable boardroom betrayal /B3
Deficit seen to reach P147.4B in '06 /B8
Philippines world's best in IT /B12

PANGILINAN

GARCIA

DE CASTRO

RPN 9, IBC 13 bidding attracts investors

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE PLANNED SALE THIS YEAR of sequestered government stations RPN 9 and IBC 13 is generating interest from the likes of businessman Manuel V. Pangilinan, veteran media executives Frederico M. Garcia and Arlene de Castro and programmers like Solar Entertainment and even GMA Network Inc., well-placed sources said.

The sale of assets of RPN 9 and IBC 13 was previously estimated to yield a combined P4.5 billion for the government.

Sources said that Pangilinan, popularly known as MVP, and Garcia, former president of ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp., were planning to bid jointly for Radio Philippines Network or RPN 9.

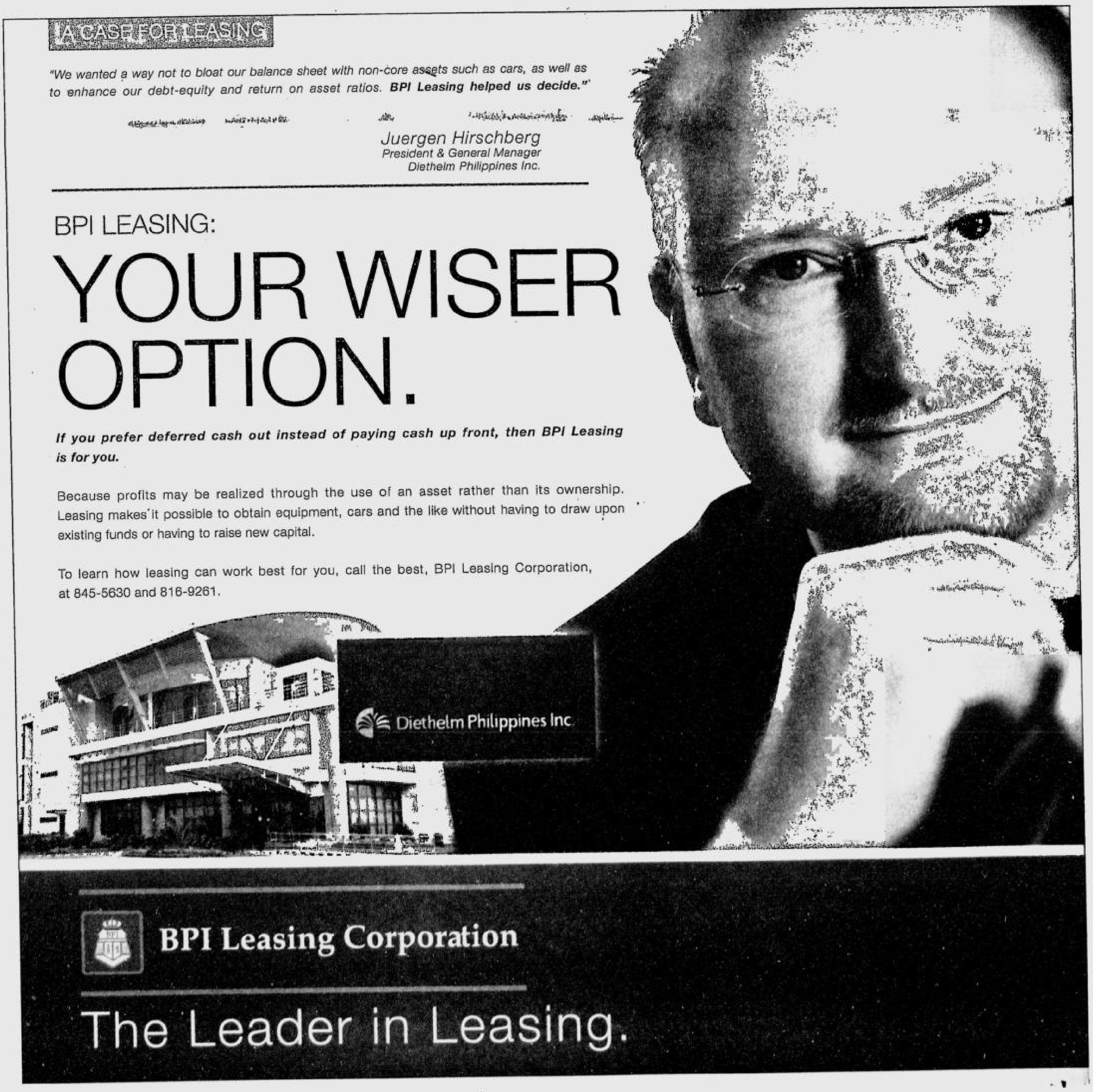
Talks about their tie-up have been going around the industry for at least three months now. Employees of RPN 9, according to another source, were already excited with the thought that MVP would be coming in.

During a media conference two weeks ago, advertisers said they were already anticipating the entry of MVP in broadcast.

"Advertisers said they will start placing their bets on whatever station MVP will buy because of his track record," said a source from the broadcast industry.

Pangilinan successfully turned Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. into the country's most profitable company and transformed previ-

RPN 9/B2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NO FREE LUNCH

Cielito F. Habito

THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT'S MAIN strategy to fight poverty is to pursue economic growth, declares my friend Rep. Joey Salceda, a key economic adviser of the President. In the Management Association of the Philippines (MAP) "Economic Review and Outlook for 2006" forum last Friday where we both presented our respective takes on our current economic performance, he pointed out how 70 percent of actual poverty reduction in other countries could be traced to economic growth, and only 30 percent to redistributive policies.

Studies from the UNDP and the World Bank that examine data across various countries indeed bear him out on this. I started my leadership of Neda in 1992 with my boss President Fidel V. Ramos declaring that our government's prior task was to enlarge our national bibingka, at a time when the economy was at a virtual standstill. And as economic growth picked up through the 1990s, so did poverty incidence decline quite significantly by the time we left office in 1998.

Short of target

Note that it is not economic growth per se that leads to poverty reduction, but the jobs that are created with such growth. What worries me about the kind of growth we have been seeing of late is that growth in jobs had not been commensurate with growth in economic production. While we are not alone in this phenomenon called "jobless growth," the official 2005 employment data leave much to be desired.

The regular Labor Force Survey indicated that on an annual average, 699,000 jobs were created in the economy last year. The services sector accounted for 424,000 of these, agriculture contributed 249,000, and industry came up with the remaining 46,000 jobs.

The problem is, about one million new workers join the labor force yearly. This tells us that job creation had fallen short of the increase in workers looking for jobs. It's no wonder, then, that half a million workers were reported to have left for overseas jobs in the past year alone.

Job quality down

There's even more cause for concern. It's bad enough that the quantity of new jobs created did not measure up to requirements and targets. The quality of the new jobs was likewise questionable, to say the least. Two things in the labor statistics bear this out.

One, underemployment rate—or the proportion of workers who indicated the desire or need to work more—rose sharply from 16.9 percent in October 2004 to 21.2 percent in October 2005. It's worth noting that a worker needs to have worked only one hour within the whole week previous to the survey to be classified as "employed." The numbers tell us that over a fifth of those who were working are in jobs that are not good enough, and thus have expressed the need to work even more.

Two, the data also clearly show that the bulk of the jobs created were of the self-employed ("own account workers") or unpaid family worker categories, accounting for 515,000 and 476,000 new jobs respectively. Only 146,000 of the new jobs were of the wage and salary worker category. In contrast, I distinctly recall how the share of the latter had grown in the 1990s, allowing me to report then that the quality of jobs our economy was generating had been improving.

Quality of growth

The implication of all this is that it is not enough to pursue economic growth alone, in terms of simply raising the aggregate GDP growth rate. It must also be quality growth, i.e. growth that produces jobs and livelihoods for as many people as possible.

If the reported growth of the economy last year has not been widely felt, the explanation can be easily seen in the sources of that growth. The fastest growers in 2005 were the finance and mining industries, with 15.4 percent and 9.3 percent growth rates respectively. But the data tell us that there are only 337,000 workers in finance, and only 116,000 in mining. On the other hand, agriculture, with more than 12 million workers, only grew at 2 percent—not even fast enough to keep up with the growth in population.

More baskets

We need, in short, to broaden the base of our economy's growth. We need to put our eggs, our economic stakes, in more baskets. It is not good enough to focus on the Clark/Subic-Metro Manila-Calabarzon geographic triangle, on the reasoning that it accounts for 55 percent of our GDP—when it accounts for a far lower proportion of our workers and population. It is not good enough to look to information and communication technology (ICT) to drive GDP growth from the services sector, when 70 percent of our poor are in the rural areas. Agriculture deserves much more attention than it is getting. If the 12 million farmers and farm workers and their families had more money in their pockets to spend, the rest of the economy would get a tremendous boost.

Only with such broader-based, job-creating growth would we see a substantial reduction in poverty.

Questions and comments welcome at chabito@ateneo.edu

RPN 9, IBC 13 bidding . . .

From page B1

ously losing Pilipino Telephone Corp. into a money-making telco.

"It helps that the golden handcuffs of Freddie with ABS-CBN is about to end so he is free to partner with anybody," said a source, referring to the non-compete clause on Garcia's retirement from the Lopez-owned network.

The duo may tie-up with Solar Entertainment, which is controlled by Wilson Tieng. Solar has a programming contract with RPN 9.

De Castro, according to the sources, was interested to produce the news content for IBC 13.

But the wife of Vice President Noli de Castro is unlikely to join a team that would include Garcia.

De Castro is reportedly organizing a news team to buy a block time in IBC 13.

"She is not going to buy the station because apparently, the group of El Shaddai is already controlling it," said another source.

Veteran broadcaster Korina Sanchez, according to sources, may join Garcia if he succeeds in buying into RPN 9, according to sources.

Pangilinan declined to comment on his interest in RPN 9. But a source close to him said that the station still has commercial value despite its existing contract with Solar Entertainment.

"If you include the block-timer in the consortium, then it might work," the source said.

Tieng, however, said he has not received any proposal from Pangilinan to bid together for RPN 9. "Our contract with RPN 9 is short term. It just gets extended," said the owner of Solar Entertainment.

Whether the government could generate the estimated amount from the sale of the two stations is another matter.

Some analysts suggested the two stations could not fetch very attractive bids because most of their equipment were old and that much of the airtime, especially in IBC 13, have been sold to block-timers like El Shaddai.

HSBC's . . .

From page B1

If fiscal numbers would not be as good as expected, then the peso could stay within the 53 level, he said.

The national government's budget deficit for January is expected to be announced anytime this week.

National Treasurer Omar Cruz earlier expressed optimism that the target of reducing the deficit to P124.9 billion for the full year was not difficult to accomplish. He cited the decline in interest rates as a factor, explaining that this reduces the cost of the government's borrowings.

For the first quarter, while it is yet to be seen whether the fiscal targets for the full year would be attained, Veloso said the peso would range between 51.75 to 52.75 to the dollar.

Veloso added that interest rates were expected to be stable this year, with the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas seen keeping the benchmark rates at 7.5 percent given the high level of liquidity in the system.

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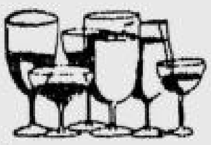

Victor C. Agustin

VICENTE PANLILIO IS SUPPOSED TO BE A nominee of the Banco de Oro Group in the Equitable PCIBank board, but the banker did the unthinkable when, without consulting his principals, he took a stand contrary to the BDO position.

During Friday's supercharged executive committee meeting, Panlilio unilaterally presented an aide memoire supporting the position of GSIS president Winston Garcia, which was, to auction the bank's 10-percent treasury shares alongside that of the GSIS stake.

The long and the short of it was that, following the uproar among the BDO nominees led by Teresita Sy no less, Panlilio resigned his directorship and left the Makati headquarters.

Guess where he had lunch? At the Century Park Hotel in Manila, where, in a private function room, ex-Philippine National Bank board members like Panlilio were treated to a sumptuous lunch by, we are not kidding, taipan Lucio Tan no less.

Guess what the hot topic of the lunch was?

La Salle and GMA

THE PRESIDENT has resorted to hiding behind an investigating committee, while his top lawyers seek to delay the proceedings until the term is over.

In the meantime, the president's aides switch to the witch hunt and suppression mode.

Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and the Garci scandal? No, we're sorry, but we are referring to La Salle Greenhills president Bernard Oca's handling of the school's "bully" issue.

Instead of calling the parents face-to-face and their respective sons to immediately resolve an escalating problem, the school even deferred for next week what originally had been last Friday's release of its now three-month-long investigation of the bully issue.

(See Cocktales, Feb. 15, for background.)

Worse, another student who happens to be a son of the lawyer of the victim has suffered collateral damage, and is being asked to report to the principal's office on Monday.

Oca, in the meantime, still refuses to meet and assure the parents of the bully's victim that, like what the La Salle Brothers preach to GMA, transparency will be observed and justice will be served in the school grounds.

Despite already having been the subject of a complaint in November, the 15-year-old bully, a Grade 7 repeater and a taekwondo practitioner, still managed to hit back and elbow several times his nerdish victim after their teachers, for some strange reason, put the two beside each other in a school presentation.

The bully had already executed a handwritten apology and owned up to the offenses being blamed on him, which includes cell phone theft, check forgery and regularly filching the victim's P50 daily allowance.

Instead of being dismissed as called for in the De La Salle rule book, the bully, who shares the surname with an illustrious Southern Tagalog political clan, was merely transferred to another section.

To add insult to injury, the assistant principal even lost the bully's handwritten confession.

Money-go-round

- Asian Spirit is awaiting regulatory approval from Hong Kong authorities to begin charter flights from the Chinese territory to Boracay and Puerto Princesa.
- With Joya condominium posting an 87-percent sales turnover as of yearend, and the strong takeup of the planned One Rockwell, Rockwell Land decided to retire a P714-million loan that matured last month. From P4.6 billion in total debts in 2000, the debts of the Lopez land development company have been reduced to almost P700 million, the latter due to mature in 2008.

Heard through the grapevine

DBP CHAIR Vitaliano Nañagas II thinks Mike Arroyo is the cause of his problems in the state-owned Development Bank of the Philippines.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@pldtdsl.net or cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com)

Weak trade seen on interest worries

From page B1

US Federal Reserve hinted that the future of interest rates would be influenced by economic reports.

"Some of the US economic reports that came out this week support the view of a rate hike in the next Fed meeting. Investors are wary that if US interest rates rise, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas will also hike domestic interest rates as well, and this would weigh on the market," BPI Trade said.

For the week, the benchmark index rose 17 points or 0.8 percent, buoyed by bargain-hunting after the market touched a low of 2,044 last week, positive corporate earnings results and the rating outlook upgrade to "stable" by Standard and Poor's and Fitch Ratings.

BPI Trade also said that what helped whet investors' appetite was the drop in oil prices and the gains on Wall Street. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

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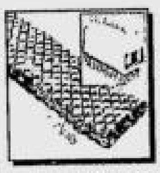

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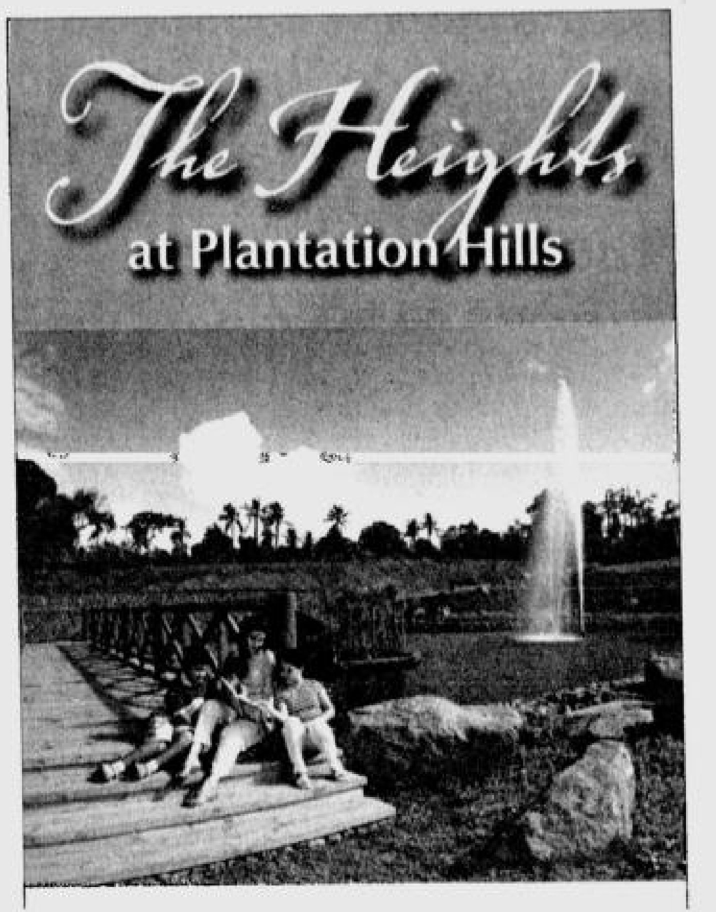

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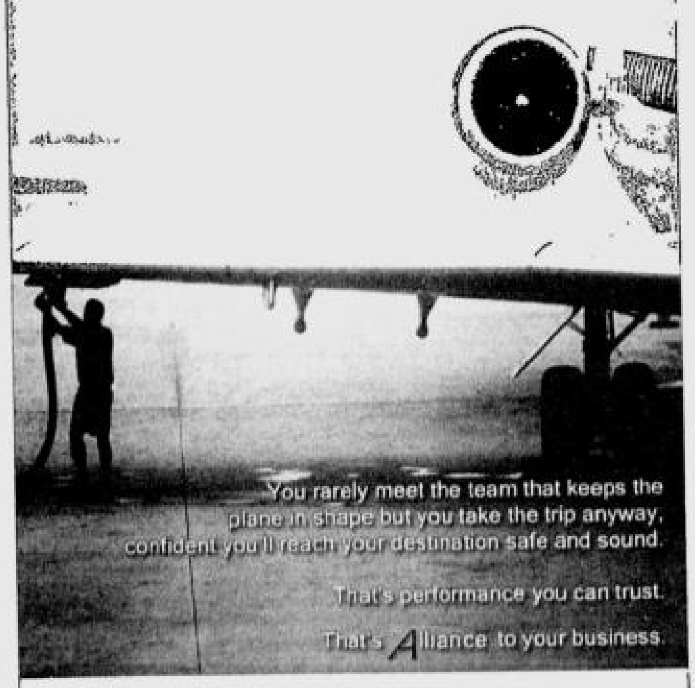
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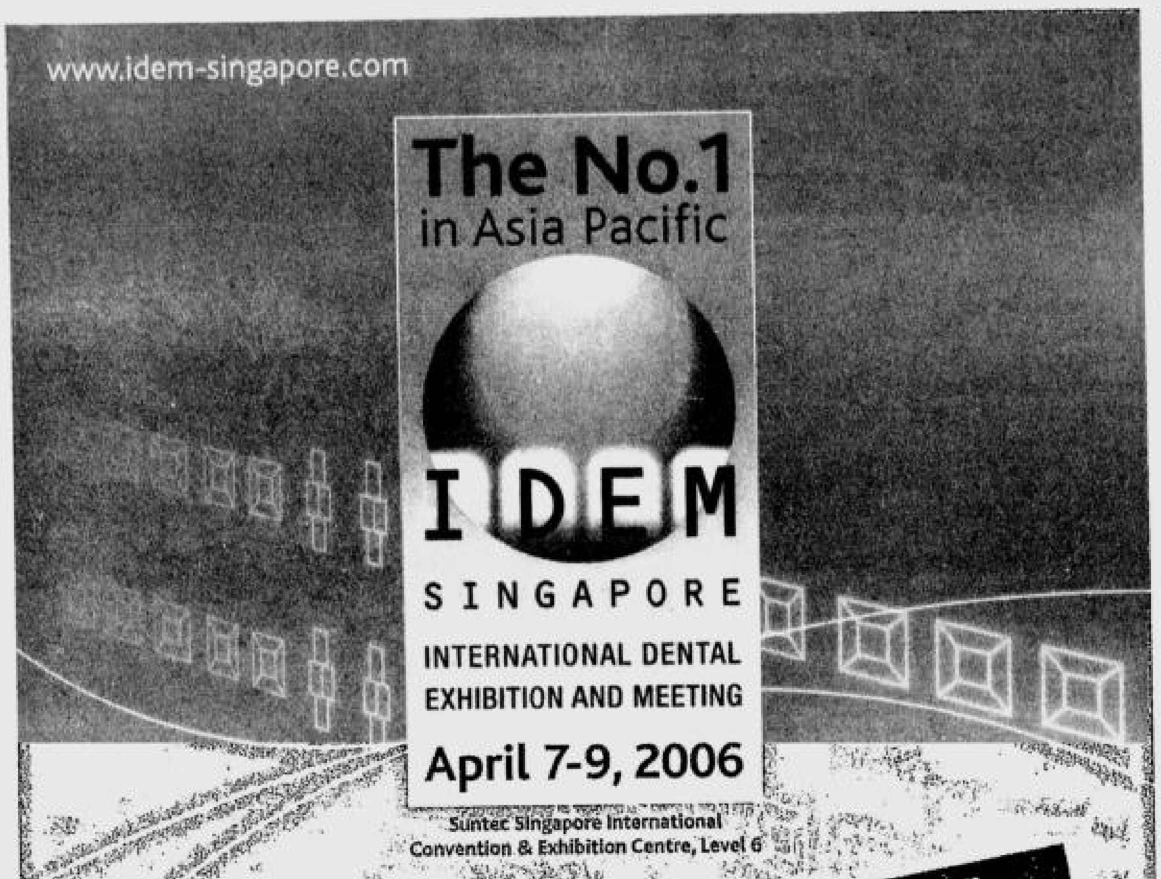
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DOT's job is to create demand for tourism industry, says Durano

By Clarissa S. Batino

DURANO BETOY JOHNSON

THE EXPECTED ROBUST GROWTH IN tourist arrivals in the coming years is driving up investments in hotels and accommodation facilities.

For this year, Tourism Secretary Joseph Durano said investments in the hotel business were expected to double to about P4 billion from last year's P2 billion.

Durano said a Korean businessman had committed to invest P2 billion this year to put up a 700-room hotel in Mactan, Cebu City. Durano did not identify the Korean businessman but said he has businesses in Guam and New York. The investor, he said, was considering to have Hyatt, Sheraton or Intercon to manage the planned first-class hotel in Mactan.

"This Korean investor went to Cebu last year for the first time and fell in love with the place," said the tourism chief during a roundtable discussion with the INQUIRER business staff.

Another Korean group has also invested P500 million in a golf course in Cagayan de Oro.

Koreans make up 18.5 percent of the tourists coming to the Philippines.

Banking giants Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co. and Philippine National Bank are in the process of reopening two foreclosed hotels also in Cebu City. Metrobank will soon open Marco Polo Hotel while PNB will operate the foreclosed Coral Reef Hotel.

PNB owner Lucio Tan is expected to tap the Ana Hotel Group, which also manages the Century Park Hotel, to operate Coral Reef Hotel, said Durano.

On top of these, about 10 resort operators in Boracay are planning to put up tourist facilities in Coron, Palawan, he said.

Durano said additional rooms were needed to meet growing demand. Citing an inventory of four- and five-star tourist accommodation facilities in the country last year, Durano said the country has only 12,000 rooms available. This number can accommodate three million tourists a year. However, shortage occurs during peak seasons.

Including pension houses and motels, the number of rooms would be about 24,000. "By the end of 2007, we expect additional 2,000 rooms under the four- and five- star category," said Durano.

Durano said Cebu was the preferred destination of about half of the country's visitors, with Boracay coming in next.

Tourist arrivals in 2005 were placed at 2.8 million. The Department of Tourism expects the number to increase to at least 3 million this year.

Durano said 90 percent of these tourists preferred to stay in four- and five-star hotels.

The tourism chief is counting on Shangri-la Hotel and Discovery Suites which are putting up hotels in Boracay, as well as other projects in the pipeline to help address the expected surge in the demand for tourist accommodation facilities in the country.

However, hotel projects take at least two years to complete.

He said hotels in Metro Manila and in Cebu had been beefing up their capacity in anticipation of the steady increase in tourist arrivals, which were expected to reach five million in 2010.

DOT studies showed that each tourist spends here an average of $90 a day. Japanese travelers spend at least $10 more each.

The boy from Lupi

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honesto C. General

LUPI IS ONE OF THE SMALL TOWNS IN THE hinterlands of Camarines Sur. Lupi used to be called a railroad town, along with two other equally small towns, because, until the Andaya Highway was opened about five years ago, it was accessible only by rail. An upland town, Lupi's economy is almost entirely anchored on coconuts.

Recently, my grandson Paco came from Naga City with eight classmates (one girl). They were all sophomores in Digital Illustration and Animation (DIA) at the Ateneo de Naga University (ADNU). I put them up at my house for the night. They attended a one-day conference on digital animation at UP Diliman.

DIA is a four-year diploma course offered only by ADNU. DIA is above my head, but I understand the computerized special effects you see on TV and the movies nowadays are the handiwork of DIA practitioners.

About 10 years ago, the late Fr. Raul Bonoan, S.J., then president of ADNU and who had been building computer courses, sent one of his faculty members to the Microsoft headquarters in Seattle to study DIA. Then he was sent to Holland to a company that invented DIA. When he came back, he designed the curriculum. Since then, the curriculum has been expanded and toughened.

DIA is the most expensive course in campus. Tuition is P26,000 (a fabulous fortune in Naga) per semester. It is also the toughest. Dropout rate is high. Paco's sophomore class is down to 40 students. Money may get a student in at the freshman year, but only talent and aptitude will pull him through the four-year grind.

For the past two years, a team from ADNU has come to Manila to compete in digital animation against teams from UP and St. Benilde. Naga has won the major prizes every year.

One look at Paco's companions and I knew they were all kids from faraway barrios. In fact, Paco tells me that none of his classmates is from the big city of Naga. His buddies were children of small businessmen, government employees and farmers.

Christopher (Toper to his friends) was the boy from Lupi. Paco told me that Toper is among the best in class.

Toper, an only child, stays in Naga with his widowed mother in a small rented apartment. His mother works at the City Hall. She probably has a hard time keeping both ends meet. But no sacrifice is too great for the hi-tech education of a talented son. That is a Filipino mother for you.

There is a lot of untapped talent in our far-flung barrios. All that is needed is a window of opportunity. ADNU has opened a window into the wonderful hi-tech world of Digital Illustration and Animation. And barrio kids and their parents are grabbing the chance.

Are there jobs waiting for Toper and his classmates after graduation? You bet there are. Those who have finished the DIA course have found good-paying jobs in Metro Manila. Some have gone into the DIA business for themselves.

Soon jobs will open abroad where there is a rising demand for digital illustrators and animators. ADNU is expanding its DIA facilities (a five-story building is being planned), and the course is being improved. Toper and his classmates are being groomed for export.

So what if our highly trained youth wind up working abroad? If Toper gets a job in Hollywood, hurrah for him. Think of the glory he will bring to his mother and the small town of Lupi.

TeleEye ties up with Microserve

THE TELEEYE GROUP, A HONG KONG-based manufacturer of security cameras and systems, is forming a joint venture with local information technology firm Microserve Computers Co. in a bid to expand its presence in the Philippines and in the region.

The joint venture company, TeleEye Philippines Inc., will be the group's flagship company in the country.

"Given the broad application of TeleEye products, we believe that our success in Hong Kong can be continued in the Philippines," said Dr. Cliff Chan, TeleEye Group CEO.

"We are pleased to have Microserve Computers Co. as our partner, with its more than 10 years of experience in installing and servicing closed circuit TV (CCTV) products," Chan added.

Considering the Philippines' well developed telecommunications and IT infrastructure, we believe that TeleEye has a great potential in the Philippine market," said TeleEye Philippines Inc. president Fanny Coling, who is also head of Microserve Computers.

The TeleEye system enables users to view live video of company operations remotely through various communication media telephone lines, mobile network or the Internet. Video can be recorded in hard disks and retrieved later for playback.

Coling said the system could be integrated with video cameras, audio or intelligent devices for use in the management of retail operations, manufacturing and warehousing; administration of property and buildings; overseeing of unmanned and restricted premises, and traffic control.

TeleEye is also eyeing partners to handle the markets in major cities and provinces nationwide.

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BSP to ease rules on banks' mutual fund investments

Legal department sees flaws in old regulation

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS plans to liberalize an old regulation that bars banks from investing in mutual funds.

The move is aimed at boosting the fledging local capital markets.

BSP chief legal counsel Juan de Zuniga told reporters that banks were not allowed to place their own money in mutual funds but, ironically, they can manage such funds.

A mutual fund is a pool of funds from shareholders or plan unit holders that is invested in securities. The units or shares are redeemable by the fund on demand by the investor.

"There's a flaw in that regulation," Zuniga said. "They can't invest but they can manage? Why should you prohibit it when banks have the resources and expertise to determine whether a mutual fund is doing well?"

He said the BSP's supervision and examination sector (SES) had received a proposal seeking the relaxation of this restriction and the legal department was in turn asked for a legal opinion on whether that was doable. Zuniga said the prohibition was provided in the old General Banking Act but when the banking law was amended in 2000, that provision was no longer present.

However, he said the prohibition was still categorically stated in the BSP's existing manual of regulations for banks, which could be addressed by a simple amendment by the policy-making Monetary Board.

The BSP's legal department said the risk involved in mutual fund investments might be lower if the banks managing them were investors themselves.

Coconut output seen posting slower growth

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE COUNTRY'S COCONUT output and export volume are expected to grow at slower rates this year based on rainfall patterns in the previous year, an industry report showed.

The United Coconut Associations of the Philippines said coconut production in 2006 would reach about 2.66 million metric tons in copra terms, or an increase of 4.3 percent from 2.55 million in 2005.

This growth rate, however, would be lower than the 7.7 percent growth posted last year. Also, UCAP said export volumes were expected to increase this year by only 3.6 percent to 2.17 million MT in copra terms. This would be just about a quarter of last year's growth rate of 14.6 percent.

The slower growth projection was based on the lower-than-normal rainfall levels in some parts of the country.

Still, the group indicated that actual coconut production tended to be on the higher side considering that in 2005, actual output grew when estimates showed a "marginal decline."

"Production in areas anticipated to register growth (in 2005) was underestimated, which more than compensated for the predicted shortfall in Western and Cental Visayas as well as Northern and Western Mindanao," the report said.

For 2006, coconut oil exports is seen to grow by about 2.7 percent to 1.13 million MT from 1.1 million MT.

This means a significant slowdown for the sector's best-performing export, which grew 14.9 percent between 2005 and 2004.

The bulk of the country's coconut oil exports is used in making lubricants for aircraft, cosmetics, soap and margarine.

The country's major markets for coconut oil are the United States, Europe, Korea, Malaysia and Japan.

GOINGS-ON

Eco-Minds' special award

THE ECO-MINDS FORUM, WHICH PREMIERED in the Philippines last October, received a special prize for outstanding and unusual communications in the Bayer Award for Excellence in Communications, held recently at Leverkusen, Germany.

The annual global award honors outstanding advertising concepts, press activities and internal communications of Bayer subsidiaries. Bayer corporate communications head for South East Asia Dorothy Claro, a Filipino who headed the Eco-Minds program, was the lone Asian recipient of the award.

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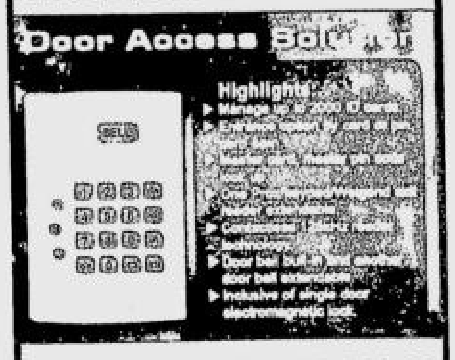

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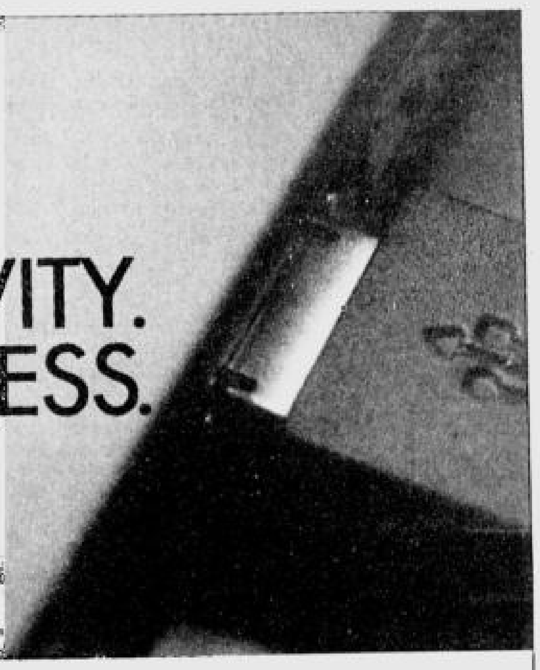

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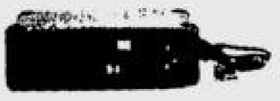

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Plans to spend ahead of time seen to open Pandora's Box

Budget deficit, tax revenues to determine credit-rating trend

By Doris C. Dumlao

INVESTMENT BANK UBS HAS CAUTIONED the government against pump-priming, believing that aggressive capital spending ahead of the actual rise in revenues may open up a Pandora's Box.

"While we continue to believe that the extra revenue from the implementation of the expanded value added tax is forthcoming, plans to frontload spending may introduce an extra level of uncertainty," said Christa Janjic, UBS senior economist for Southeast Asia.

Janjic, fresh from her visit to Manila, said in a Feb. 17 commentary that the budget deficit and, particularly, the tax revenue data would be the most closely watched macroeconomic numbers in the country this year and would determine any credit rating action.

"We feel somewhat more cautious about the 2006 deficit target [though not the trend]," Janjic said. "The possibility of a higher budget deficit for the first quarter of 2006 versus last year risks confusing market watchers at a time when the entire focus is on the fiscal numbers.

"Besides, front-loading bears the risk that it cannot be cut back should tax revenue come in below target."

The government expects the VAT to perk up the tax-to-GDP ratio by 1.3 percent of GDP, while administrative measures are seen to add another 0.6 percentage point, bringing up the ratio to 14.6 percent this year from 12.7 percent last year.

"Our own estimate is more conservative and calls for a tax-to-GDP ratio of 14 percent only," Janjic said. "However, we expect this to be offset by higher non-tax revenue."

The government has vowed to intensify revenue collection efforts to achieve a GDP growth target of at least 5.7 this year while keeping the budget deficit within the target of P125 billion or 2.1 percent of GDP.

Sustaining the deficit reduction any further would be "entirely contingent on the VAT being successful, as there is no significant other tax revenue legislation planned at this stage," Janjic said.

The economist said UBS had not changed its views regarding the success of VAT.

As bulk of the revenue would stem from the hike in the VAT rate rather than the introduction of a new tax, Janjic said collection efficiency should meet the 70 percent target rate.

For investors tracking the success of VAT, Janjic said additional revenues would be captured not only by the Bureau of Internal Revenue (P47.8 billion) but also by the Bureau of Customs (P27.3 billion).

London-based Fitch Ratings earlier upgraded its outlook on Philippine sovereign credit to "stable" from "negative," the second global rating agency, after Standard & Poor's, to recognize the government's improving cash budget position.

But while noting that short-term fiscal prospects had improved, Fitch also warned of lingering challenges.

"Even with the VAT in place, government revenue, relative to GDP, is the second-lowest of all rated sovereigns, and it is as yet unclear how or whether it will increase to meet mounting spending pressures, which we believe to be forthcoming," Fitch analyst James McCormack said. "A more significant fiscal adjustment than that undertaken to date will be required to avoid a recurrence of downward pressure on the sovereign ratings."

RP urged to issue domestic dollar bonds

By Michelle V. Remo

WITH THE LOCAL MARKET AWASH in dollars, the national government has been urged to issue dollar-denominated bonds domestically, instead of abroad, to raise the remainder of its financing requirement for the year.

Albay Rep. Joey Salceda, who also serves as economic adviser to President Macapagal-Arroyo, said the government should take advantage of the huge volume of dollars that are now in the domestic market by borrowing locally.

"There are too many dollars here, so we can buy dollars domestically," Salceda said at the sidelines of the "Economic Review and Outlook for 2006" organized by the Management Association of the Philippines last Friday. "Doing so would help save on borrowing cost."

The government still needs to raise close to $1 billion to complete its foreign financing requirement for 2006.

Under the government's fiscal program for this year, it should borrow an estimated $3.1 billion to service maturing foreign debts. Last January, it already sold $2.2 billion worth of dollar- and euro-denominated bonds. It now needs to borrow only a little over $900 million to complete its financing requirement.

Salceda said that by raising its dollar requirements domestically, the government could save a significant amount of borrowing cost, considering that interest rates here are lower.

He said another option was to borrow pesos, by increasing the volume of Treasury bills and bonds being issued by the government, and then use the proceeds to buy dollars from the domestic market.

The surge in dollar inflows is largely attributed to the increase in remittances from overseas Filipino workers.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas earlier reported that OFW remittances last year hit an all-time high of $10.7 billion.

The government said the increase in OFW remittances was due to the higher number of Filipinos being deployed abroad, and to the higher-paying jobs that have opened to Filipinos.

Higher portfolio investments are also credited with helping bring in more dollars to the country.

Portfolio investments jumped to over $2 billion in the first 11 months of 2005 from only less than $500 million in the same period of 2004, Salceda said.

The economic adviser said the increase in portfolio investments was a result of the government's improving fiscal condition.

The budget deficit was kept at P146.5 billion last year, way below the target of P180 billion.

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Pursuant to Section 9 of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) dated October 13, 2000 executed by and between the Board of Investments (BOI) and the Department of Finance (DOF) in compliance with the provision of Article 21 of Executive Order No. 226 (E.O. 226) regarding the transferability of tax credit certificates (TCCs) issued under the said E.O., the following additional guidelines are hereby adopted:

"1. Transfers by companies belonging to a distressed industry sector:

Transferors belonging to an industry sector which BOI has assessed to be in distress shall be allowed to transfer their outstanding TCCs to any BOI-registered transferees without requiring them to comply with the conditions imposed under Section 1c, 1e and 1f of the prevailing MOA, *provided* that this type of transfer shall be allowed for one year only from official notification to the Center by BOI that the industry sector is in distress without prejudice to renewal thereof upon approval by the Executive Committee."

"2. Section 9 of the MOA is hereby amended to include the following paragraph:

"Henceforth, in order to simplify the administrative process in amending the existing MOA, and since BOI and DOF are well represented in the Center's Excom, any amendment to the prevailing MOA including exceptions to the guidelines for meritorious consideration shall now be done through a resolution duly approved by the Center's Executive Committee, which resolution shall be for implementation wihout the need for another MOA between BOI and DOF, subject to compliance with the provisions of EO 226 and with the required administrative procedures under the Administrative Code."

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DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE
(Sgd.) **GAUDENCIO A. MENDOZA, JR.**
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Signed in the presence of:

(Sgd.) **EFREN V. LEANO**
Executive Director
Board of Investments

(Sgd.) **ERNESTO Q. HIANSEN**
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(Sgd.) **TERESITA V. ILAGAN**
Chairperson, Senior Bidding Committee

(PDI – February 20, 2006)

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Methodology
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March 3, 2006 (Friday)
Introductory Session – 8:30AM - 9:00AM
Basic Business and Marketing Concepts
Session Chair: Ms. Marivic Ac-Ac
Professor, San Beda College

Session 1 – 9:00AM – 10:00AM
The Enigma of Marketing Mix in Today's Business Environment: Hit or Miss!
Speaker : Ms. Marivic Ac-Ac

Session 2 – 10:00AM – 11:00AM
Consumer Analysis : Its Effect to Business Strategy
Speaker : Mr. Ricardo de Vera
President, Pinpoint Direct Marketing

Session 3 – 11:00AM – 12:00NOON
Market Segmentation, Targeting and Positioning: Crucial Effect to Business Strategy
Speaker : Ms. Ma. Teresa Villanueva
Senior Executive Officer, Jimenez Basic

12:00NOON – 1:00PM - LUNCH

Session 4 – 1:00PM – 2:00PM
Connecting with your Consumers through Effective Communication
Speaker : (tba)

Session 5 - 2:00PM – 3:00PM
Mapping the Winning Strategies for Tougher Times
Speaker : Ms. Vivian Faustino
VP for Communication, Earth & Style Corporation

3:00PM – 4:00PM- WORKSHOP

4:00PM – 6:00PM - PRESENTATION OF CASES/SUMMATION

Registration Fees
PMA Member : Php 5,500.00
Non-PMA Member: Php 6,500.00

For inquiries please call the Philippine Marketing Association Secretariat at tel. Nos. 636-1451; 634-5722; 634-4890 look for Ms. Lydia Mariñas or e-mail: marinaslydia@yahoo.com; philmarketing@pldtdsl.net

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of Feb. 17, 2006)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
FINANCIAL					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	35	35	35	35	130,500
Bank of the Phil. Islands	58.5	59	58	58.5	3,323,300
China Banking Corp.	615	615	615	615	5,100
Citystate Savings Bank	19	19	19	19	400
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	65	65.5	64	64.5	201,200
International Exch. Bank	22.25	22.75	22.25	22.75	56,500
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	33	33	32.5	33	939,800
Philippine National Bank	30.5	31	30.5	30.5	11,900
Phil. Savings Bank	35	35	35	35	10,000
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	13.25	13.25	13.25	13.25	6,000
Security Bank Corp.	39	39.5	39	39	183,500
Union Bank of the Phil.	34	34.5	34	34.5	13,300
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Manulife Financial Corp.	3210	3220	3210	3220	380
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	146	146	146	146	52,800
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2190	2190	2190	2190	80
Ivantage Corp.	0.74	0.78	0.73	0.78	7,270,000
INDUSTRIAL					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
First Gen Corp.	45	45	45	45	561,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	42.5	43	42	42.5	290,000
Manila Electric Co. A	13	13	12.5	13	169,400
Manila Electric Co. B	19.5	20	19.5	19.75	352,700
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.3	6.3	6.2	6.3	4,306,000
Petron Corp.	4.55	4.7	4.55	4.7	2,780,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
CADP Group Corp.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	40,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	20.5	21	20.5	21	39,100
Jollibee Foods Corp.	35.5	36.5	35.5	35.5	835,000
Pancake House Inc.	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	40,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	20,000
San Miguel Corp. A	61.5	62	61.5	62	139,300
San Miguel Corp. B	82	83	82	82.5	132,400
Universal Robina Corp.	18.25	18.25	17.75	18	2,728,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	740,000
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	0.31	0.31	0.3	0.31	1,620,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	1.36	1.4	1.32	1.38	8,271,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.25	4.3	4.25	4.3	270,000
CHEMICALS					
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	220,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Global Equities Inc.	0.0725	0.0775	0.0725	0.075	900,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.07	0.0725	0.07	0.0725	700,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.21	0.24	0.21	0.22	930,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0085	0.0085	0.008	0.008	7,000,000
Atok-Big Wedge.Inc. B	11.75	11.75	11.75	11.75	1,000
Ayala Corp.	327.5	332.5	327.5	332.5	446,150
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.51	0.52	0.51	0.52	210,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	5	5	5	5	877,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.024	0.025	0.024	0.025	42,700,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.34	2.38	2.34	2.38	943,000
APC Group Inc.	0.215	0.215	0.215	0.215	30,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	44,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.87	0.88	0.87	0.87	360,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	0.68	0.68	0.68	0.68	70,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	8.8	8.8	8.8	8.8	1,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.98	0.99	0.98	0.99	2,410,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	452,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.54	1.56	1.54	1.54	2,414,000
House of Investments Inc.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	150,000
JG Summit Holdings Inc.	4.95	4.95	4.85	4.85	98,000
Medco Holdings	0.22	0.22	0.21	0.21	180,000
Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	200,000
Pacifica	0.013	0.013	0.012	0.013	95,200,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.24	0.26	0.24	0.245	8,890,000
Prime Media Holdings Inc.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	47,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.52	0.53	0.52	0.52	270,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.14	0.145	0.14	0.14	2,300,000
SM Investments Corp.	219	220	218	218	55,390
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co	0.0625	0.0625	0.0625	0.0625	6,000,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.13	0.135	0.13	0.135	2,140,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	10.5	10.75	10.5	10.75	13,902,700
Belle Corp.	0.99	1	0.99	1	3,040,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.245	0.245	1,400,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	1.62	1.68	1.62	1.64	4,307,000
C&P Homes Inc.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	101,000
Cebu Prop. Vent B	0.88	0.88	0.88	0.88	190,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.22	0.235	0.22	0.225	7,580,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.24	0.26	0.24	0.26	2,370,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.45	0.46	0.44	0.46	7,550,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.5	1.54	1.5	1.54	6,005,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	200,000
Interport Res.	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	15,000,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.205	0.215	0.205	0.21	2,920,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.4	1.46	1.4	1.44	12,116,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.33	0.34	0.33	0.34	10,070,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.21	0.23	0.21	0.225	3,910,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.145	0.145	0.145	0.145	110,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	6.6	6.6	6.5	6.5	86,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.185	0.195	0.18	0.195	4,270,000
SM Development Corp.	1.38	1.4	1.38	1.4	57,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.9	8	7.9	8	6,239,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	1,000,000
SERVICE					
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	10.5	10.75	10.5	10.75	70,000
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.89	0.9	0.89	0.9	1,110,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	775	835	775	830	149,570
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.2	3.2	3.15	3.2	478,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1785	1790	1770	1770	137,460
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.165	0.165	0.16	0.165	5,790,000
Imperial Res.	0.013	0.015	0.013	0.015	5,200,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.055	0.055	0.0525	0.055	8,000,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	110,000
Transpacific Broadband	1.42	1.42	1.42	1.42	100,000
Philweb Corp.	0.028	0.029	0.027	0.029	122,000,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	11.75	11.75	11.75	11.75	276,800
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.77	0.77	0.77	0.77	60,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	10,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Acesite Phils Hotel Corp.	3	3	3	3	3,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.82	1.84	1.78	1.8	5,627,000
Manila Jockey Club	2.95	3	2.95	3	21,000
Philippine Racing Club	3.15	3.15	3.15	3.15	100,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	200,000
EDUCATION					
Ipeople Inc.	3.25	3.25	3.2	3.2	13,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	1.36	1.36	1.36	1.36	20,000
Paxys Inc.	7.7	7.8	7.7	7.7	234,000
MINING & OIL					
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	1	1	1	1	100,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	1.22	1.22	1.22	1.22	160,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	12,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	6	6	5.9	6	258,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.22	0.22	0.215	0.22	4,110,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.26	0.27	0.26	0.27	3,150,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.018	0.019	0.018	0.019	49,800,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.027	0.027	0.026	0.027	69,100,000
Omico Corp.	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	45,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	1.7	1.7	1.66	1.68	6,072,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	1.8	1.82	1.78	1.78	2,788,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	27.5	27.5	27	27	68,800
OIL					
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.25	0.28	0.25	0.28	21,530,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	84,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	52,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.47	0.49	0.47	0.49	790,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.5	0.54	0.5	0.53	490,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	3.95	3.95	3.95	3.95	4,000
PREFERRED					
DMCI Holdings Inc.- Pref.	1400	1400	1300	1300	150
PLDT (10% Pref) Series P	10.75	10.75	10.75	10.75	300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.75	10.75	10.75	10.75	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series X	10.75	10.75	10.75	10.75	100
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10.75	10.75	10.75	10.75	800
WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	10.25	10.75	10.25	10.5	396,600

CURRENCIES

February 19, 2006 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.840054	1.000000	51.6390
Japan	Yen	0.007147	0.008508	0.4393
United Kingdom	Pound	1.461610	1.739900	89.8467
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.108252	0.128863	6.6544
Switzerland	Franc	0.641263	0.763359	39.4191
Canada	Dollar	0.726062	0.864304	44.6318
Singapore	Dollar	0.513858	0.611696	31.5874
Australia	Dollar	0.619783	0.737790	38.0987
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.229442	2.653928	137.0462
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.224020	0.266674	13.7708
Brunei	Dollar	0.512290	0.609830	31.4910
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000091	0.000108	0.0056
Thailand	Baht	0.021386	0.025458	1.3146
UAE	Dirham	0.228723	0.272272	14.0599
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.190400	61.4711
Argentina	Peso	0.274079	0.326264	16.8479
Brazil	Real	0.396626	0.472144	24.3810
Denmark	Kroner	0.133943	0.159446	8.2336
India	Rupee	0.018984	0.022599	1.1670
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.225821	0.268817	13.8814
Mexico	New Peso	0.080181	0.095447	4.9288
New Zealand	Dollar	0.561571	0.668494	34.5204
Norway	Kroner	0.123889	0.147477	7.6156
Pakistan	Rupee	0.014029	0.016700	0.8624
South Africa	Rand	0.138565	0.164948	8.5177
Korea	Won	0.000862	0.001026	0.0530
Sweden	Kroner	0.106613	0.126912	6.5536
Syria	Pound	0.016183	0.019264	0.9948
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025930	0.030867	1.5939
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000391	0.000466	0.0241

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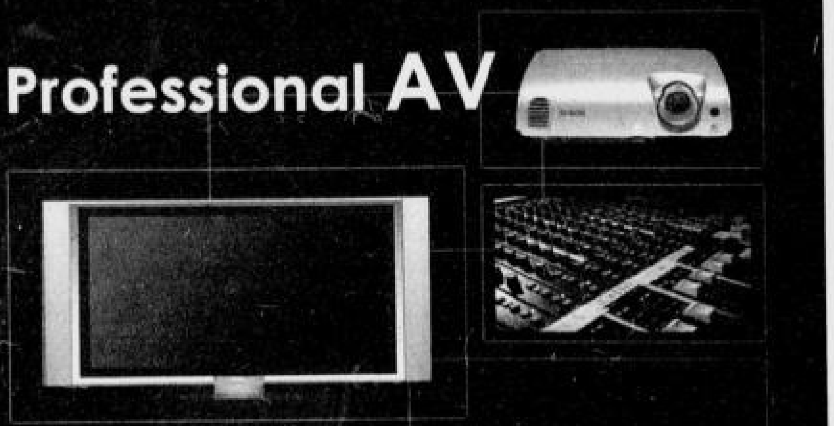

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SHARES AVAILABLE

CLUB	SELLER	BUYER
Alabang Country Club A/B*	1,150,000/Pls. Call*	Pls. Call
Alta Vista B/Corp.*	-	Pls. Call/200,000*
Baguio Country Club	-	500,000
Calatagan Golf	Pls. Call	40,000
Camp John Hay	-	200,000
Canlubang Golf	530,000	Pls. Call
Canyon Woods	120,000	-
Capitol Hills	70,000	
Cebu Country Club	1,500,000	1,300,000
Celebrity Sports	120,000	100,000
City Sports Club Cebu	-	350,000
Club Filipino	143,000	
Eagleridge A/B*/C**	180,000	150,000/Pls. Call*/250,000**
Eastridge A/B*	Pls. Call	-
Evercrest	85,000	-
Fairways & Bluewater	250,000	-
Forest Hills A/B*/C**	120,000/200,000*	150,000*
Luisita Golf	Pls. Call	300,000
Manila Golf Corporate	Pls. Call	11,500,000
Manila Golf Individual	Pls. Call	11,000,000
Manila Polo	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Manila Southwoods A/B*	350,000/Pls. Call*	300,000/700,000*
Makati Sports Club	200,000	165,000
Manila Yacht Club Ind.	350,000	250,000
Metropolitan Club A/B*	120,000/150,000*	90,000
Mimosa Ind./C2*/C3**	Pls. Call	150,000/300,000*/450,000**
Mt. Malarayat A	230,000	
Orchard A/B*/C**	170,000/Pls. Call*/400,000**	150,000
Punta Fuego	400,000	
Quezon City Sports Club	160,000	120,000
Riviera Golf A/B*/C**	90,000/150,000*/250,000**	130,000*
Rockwell Leisure Club	Pls. Call	180,000
Royale Tagaytay CC	60,000	
Sherwood A/B*/C**	70,000/150,000**	60,000*
Sta. Elena Golf A/B*	Pls. Call	1,100,000/1,600,000*
The Palms Country Club	550,000	360,000
Tagaytay Country Club	330,000	310,000
Tagaytay Highlands	730,000	
Tagaytay Midlands	Pls. Call	630,000
The Country Club	2,000,000	-
Tower Club	143,000	-
Valley Golf	200,000	-
Valle Verde Ind.	100,000	-
Wack Wack Golf	6,350,000	6,000,000

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CLUB	SELLER	BUYER
Alabang Country Club "A" (Filipino)	1,150,000	-
Alabang Country Club "B" (Foreigner)	1,250,000	1,100,000
Anvaya Cove Beach & Nature Club	Please Call	
Baguio Country Club	520,000	500,000
Calatagan Golf Club "A"	40,000	20,000
Calatagan Golf Club "B"	100,000	60,000
Camp John Hay	250,000	160,000
Canlubang	500,000	480,000
Capitol Hills	60,000	-
Cebu Country Club	1,500,000	1,350,000
Celebrity Sports Club	100,000	-
Club Filipino	100,000	-
Eagleridge "A"/"B"/"C"	Please Call	-
Forest Hills "A"	130,000	90,000
Forest Hills "B"	200,000	-
Forest Hills "C"	200,000	-
Makati Sports Club "A"	180,000	170,000
Makati Sports Club "B"	250,000	-
Manila Golf (Corporate)	-	11,500,000
Manila Golf (Individual)	11,300,000	11,000,000
Manila Polo	-	2,200,000
Manila Southwoods "A"	340,000	300,000
Manila Southwoods "B"	Please Call	600,000
Manila Yacht Club	400,000	300,000
Metroclub "A"	120,000	90,000
Mimosa (Corporate)	-	400,000
Mt. Malarayat Gold "A"	275,000	-
Mt. Malarayat Gold "C"	350,000	-
Orchard Golf Club "A"	200,000	140,000
Orchard Golf Club "B"	-	350,000
Orchard Golf Club "C"	400,000	-
Quezon City Sports Club	160,000	140,000
Rockwell	Please Call	-
Spa & Lodge	400,000	-
Sta. Elena "A"	1,300,000	1,100,000
Sta. Elena "B"	1,600,000	1,500,000
Tagaytay Country Club	330,000	300,000
Tagaytay Highlands	750,000	650,000
Tagaytay Midlands	750,000	600,000
Valle Verde (Individual)	100,000	85,000
Valle Verde (Corporate)	190,000	-
Valley Golf	220,000	200,000
Wack-Wack Golf Club	6,350,000	6,175,000

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256MB DDR2 Memory
80GB SATA HDD, CD-RW Drive
Integrated 10/100/1000 Ethernet
E74 17" CRT Stealth Black Monitor
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Deficit seen to reach ₱147.4B in 2006

Mining industry expects $347M in fresh infusion

By Christine A. Gaylican

FOREIGN AND LOCAL MINING COMPANIES this year are expected to infuse $347 million in fresh investments, according to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' Mines and Geosciences Bureau.

The fresh investments will fund new mining projects and expansion activities to be undertaken by medium- and large-scale mining companies this year.

"This year's programmed investments, once realized, will double the actual investments made in 2005," the bureau's Mining Economics Division said in its latest report.

Last year's investments amounted to $107 million.

This year's investments will go to 23 priority projects in different mining tenements, said Mining Economics Division head Benjamin de Vera.

Sagittarius Mines, which has taken over the Tampacan Mining Project in Surigao, would infuse $99 million to jumpstart its project this year.

Atlas Consolidated Inc. subsidiary Carmen Copper Corp. is set to invest $85 million to rehabilitate its Toledo Copper project in Cebu.

Australasian Philippines Mining Inc. will invest $39.12 million in its Didipio Copper-Gold project.

In 2004, the Chamber of Mines projected that investments in the country's mining sector could reach about $6 billion to $7 billion over the next 10 years.

Investors on the lookout for Japanese speakers

By Juan Escandor,
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

PILI, CAMARINES SUR—JAPANESE investors are on the lookout for workers fluent in Japanese. This development has prompted the provincial government to fund Japanese language instruction programs.

Shigeo Tsubotani, Fujitso Philippines Inc. chair, said that the strategy of the Camarines Sur government to teach Japanese to workers in the province for free, coupled with the development of infrastructure facilities here, had succeeded in attracting Japanese investors to the province.

A 16-man delegation from Japan attended the graduation of the first batch of workers held here at the Capitol Convention Center on Jan. 27.

Of the graduates, 116 completed levels 4 and 3 Nihonggo language courses.

Tsubotani said that in the short term, his company was interested in recruiting Japanese literate workers who had completed a four-level Nihonggo course at the Information Technology Center of the Camarines Sur provincial government.

He said the Japanese language program of the Camarines Sur government had created a stir among Japanese companies after the news was published in a Japanese publication.

Tsubotani said it would become a basic requirement for Japanese companies to recruit workers proficient in Japanese because he said it would increase productivity.

He said Fujitso prefers Japanese literate workers because the manuals and instructions of its operations are all in Japanese—even if the software are written in English.

Fujitso is the first Japanese company that located outside of Japan in 1961. Since then, it has invested a total of $800 million in the Philippines.

Tsubotani said that the establishment of a link between the provincial government and Japanese companies has opened job opportunities for Camarines Sur's Japanese literate workers.

Gov. Luis Raymond Villafuerte said that the provincial government has expanded its language courses training to include cultural acclimatization to help workers adjust easily to the Japanese culture. Special focus is given to nurses, physical therapists and caregivers bound for Japan.

The governor said the provincial government is now ready to negotiate projects to be located in the province's first information technology (IT) park.

Villafuerte said the 2,000-seat call center facility in the five-hectare IT park is now ready for operation, while the assembly-line facilities are in the pipeline and expected to be completed in 2007.

Masanobu Kubo, vice president of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Philippines, said that his group is also eyeing the tourism sites in Camarines Sur, especially the Caramoan group of islets.

He said that some of the sites have the best white sand hideaways and coves in the Asia-Pacific region.

Kubo, who represents Japan Airlines, is urging the Camarines Sur government to improve its airport facility to accommodate jumbo jets that can fly directly to the province from Japan.

Congress doubts Customs, BIR will meet their targets

By Michelle V. Remo

THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT'S BUDGET deficit is seen to rise to P147.4 billion this year, missing its official target by a wide mark, because of the expected slowdown in the economy that will affect tax collection.

According to the projection of the Congressional Planning and Budget Department (CPBD), the economic research arm of the House of Representatives, it would be difficult for the customs and internal revenue bureaus to meet their revenue collection goals for the year.

The CPBD's deficit forecast is 0.6 percent higher than last year's deficit of P146.5 billion, and 18 percent higher than the official ceiling of P124.9 billion set by the executive branch for 2006.

The economic research body said collections of the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) might only reach P630.6 billion, or 7 percent lower than its goal of P675.4 billion. The Bureau of Customs is expected to collect P182.4 billion—7 percent lower than its P196-billion target.

But the Bureau of the Treasury remains upbeat on the prospects of the fiscal sector, citing the decline in interest rates which, in turn, is expected to reduce the government's borrowing cost.

National Treasurer Omar Cruz said that the government could even improve its P125-billion deficit target.

But the CPBD said that the BIR and the BOC might not be able to deliver the revenues expected of them due to the expected slowdown in productivity of some industries.

The CPBD's deficit forecast of P147.4 billion is equivalent to 2.4 percent of the estimated gross domestic product for the year. The official deficit-to-GDP ratio for 2006 is 2.1 percent.

CPBD said the economy, as measured by the (GDP), was likely to hit a range of 4.5 and 5.1 percent compared with the official target of 5.7 to 6.3 percent.

PLDT willing to compromise with Globe on access charges

By Clarissa S. Batino

PHILIPPINE LONG DISTANCE TELEPHONE Co. (PLDT) is willing to reduce access charges—or the fees that telcos pay one another—but not to the level its chief rival Globe Telecom Inc. has in mind, a senior official said.

PLDT softened its stance after the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) compelled the telcos to work out a compromise on the issue of access charges.

The NTC earlier said that it would treat Globe's complaint against PLDT as an administrative case if the two parties would fail to reach a deal.

A case against PLDT will jeopardize its existing P10 per call promo popular among its 2.1 million landline customers.

PLDT said the company could reduce the interconnection fees from the current rate of P4 a minute from landline to mobile, and P3 a minute from mobile to landline and between fixed lines—but the rate would still depend on traffic volumes.

A PLDT official said it would offer volume discounts. The firm has already asked Globe for an acceptable level of volume to which the discounts may be pegged.

What the telco giant will insist, according to an official, is that fees on calls to landline must be higher than calls to cellular phones.

Maintenance costs of mobile operators are lower due to higher utilization, unlike fixed lines, which are also more expensive to put up.

Access charges or termination rates are paid by the phone company that makes the call. The rates are determined bilaterally. These fees are included in the telcos' charges that subscribers have to pay.

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AN INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Cebu Port Authority, North Reclamation Area, Cebu City, through the Bids and Award Committee (BAC), invites all interested consultants to register for eligibility and to bid for the **Engagement of Financial Advisor for the Corporatization and Privatization of the Cebu Port Authority**.

Interested Consultants must submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) with Application for Eligibility to the Bids and Award Committee through BAC Secretariat on or before **March 6, 2006**.

The eligibility requirements may be obtained for a non-refundable fee of Five Thousand Pesos (P5,000.00) at the BAC Secretariat starting **March 7, 2006**. The eligibility of registered bidders shall be evaluated using a non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria based on the eligibility requirements. Eligibility requirements/documents shall be submitted in a sealed envelope to the BAC Secretariat at the above-mentioned address. The eligibility envelope shall be opened on **March 16, 2006**.

The bid documents shall be available at the BAC Secretariat starting **March 29, 2006** upon payment of non-refundable fee of Fifty Thousand Pesos (P50,000.00). Pre-bid Conference shall be held on **April 7, 2006**, 2:00 P.M. at the Conference Room, Cebu Port Authority.

CPA reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any formality/defect therein, and to accept such bid as may be deemed most advantageous to the government.

(Sgd.) **MARIO G. TAN**
BAC Chairman

Noted by:

(Sgd.) **MARIANO C.J. MARTINEZ**
General Manager

Philippine Economic Zone Authority
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Security Services Requirement of PEZA

1. The Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA), through its Corporate Operating Budget for CY 2006 intends to apply the sum of PhP 29,052,780.00 per annum being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the Security Services Requirement of PEZA. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
2. The PEZA now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the Security Services Requirement of PEZA. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. Prospective bidders must have a minimum of five (5) years experience in providing security services and should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last five (5) years with an amount of at least 50% of the ABC. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. Interested bidders may obtain further information from the PEZA and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below during office hours, Mondays to Fridays.
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be inspected and purchased by interested Bidders from 21 February to 03 March 2006, Mondays to Fridays, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of PhP 10,000.00 and submission of a certified copy of their G-EPS Certificate of Registration. The method of payment will be cash basis only. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
6. The PEZA will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on 09 March 2006, 2:00 p.m. at the 6th Floor, Social Hall, PEZA Building III, Roxas Boulevard corner San Luis St., Pasay City.
7. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before 11:00 a.m. of 21 March 2006. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form of GSIS Surety Bond in the amount of not less than 2.5% of the ABC or in the form of cash, certified check, cashier's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit in the amount of not less than 1% *of the ABC*. Late Bids shall not be accepted.
8. Bid opening shall be on 21 March 2006, 2:00 p.m. at the 6th Floor Social Hall, PEZA Bldg. III Roxas Blvd. corner San Luis St., Pasay City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend.
9. In case any of the above dates is declared a special non-working holiday, it will automatically be reset on the next working day.
10. The PEZA reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Philippine Economic Zone Authority
Bids and Awards Committee Secretariat
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THE CHAIRMAN
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(PDI – February 20 & 27, 2006)

Pancake House income up 82% in 2005 to ₱34M

By Christine A. Gaylican

PUBLICLY LISTED FASTFOOD CHAIN PANcake House Inc. (PHI) was expected to have recorded a net income of P34 million in 2005, up 82 percent from P18.67 million the previous year, according to unaudited reports.

The reports showed that PHI's flagship brand, Pancake House, and Dencio's Foods Specialists Inc. were the main profit drivers last year.

Higher sales posted by Pancake House and Dencio's branches enabled PHI to increase revenues last year by 63 percent to P818 million from P503 million in 2004.

Unicapital Associate for Strategic Research Niña G. Tinio said PHI flagship brand Pancake House earned P48 million last year, almost double the P25 million recorded in 2004.

Pancake House, which increased its branch network to 58 last year from 54 stores in 2004, grew its revenues by 17.73 percent to P498 million from P423 million the previous year.

System sales for Pancake House likewise grew to P692 million from P560 million during the period as a result of the ongoing store network expansion.

System sales reflect the combined sales of both company-owned and franchised stores.

PHI, which also operates Teriyaki Boy Group Inc., also posted higher earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization in 2005 of P 115.3 million from P80.3 million the previous year.

According to Unicapital, PHI will have to work harder to put its Dencio's chain of stores back to profitability.

Dencio's ended 2005 with 21 stores, which will grow to about 26 stores this year, according to the company's preliminary report to the Securities and Exchange Commission.

PHI took over Dencio's in September 2004.

PHI's financial performance is expected to improve further with the recent addition of Teriyaki Boy to its portfolio.

PHI now controls 70 percent of Teriyaki Boy.

Optimistic on the growth of fast casual restaurants in the Philippines, PHI has committed to put up more outlets in the coming years.

The group is expected to end 2007 with a branch network of 126 stores, 74 of which would be Pancake House, 30, Dencio's; and the remaining 22, Teriyaki Boy.

TARSIERS FOR SALE. Rising Sun Farm Fishpond Resort owned by Dr. Rogelio Bargas at Sitio Guam, Poblacion West Tabuk, Kalinga, sells exotic animals and fishes. Tarsiers, which are not endemic to Kalinga, sell for P4,000 each. EV ESPIRITU, PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

EXPORT BANK LOSES CASE

In a landmark decision penned by the Hon. Judge DELIA H. PANGANIBAN of Makati RTC Branch 64, the EXPORT & INDUSTRY BANK (EIB) lost the case it filed against DR. FLORANTE E. JONSAY, CEO of MOMARCO Import Co., Inc., who was charged of seven (7) counts of ESTAFA for violation of the Trust Receipt Law.

In year 2000, Momarco obtained an Omnibus Line from EIB which included a line for Import Letters of Credit and Trust Receipts. Using this line, it was able to import animal health products from March to October 2000. The Asian Financial Crisis back in 1997 negatively affected the economies of Asia and Momarco was one of those companies severely affected. Being heavily dependent on importation, Momarco's business failed when the interest rates abruptly jumped from 12% to 41% while the peso parity dropped from P26 to P42 to the dollar.

On March 27,2001, the Office of the City Prosecutor of Makati City through the Assistant City Prosecutor, Fiscal DELFIN R. LOPEZ, found probable cause to indict respondent JONSAY in court for seven (7) counts of ESTAFA under Article 315, par. 1(b) of the Revised Penal Code, in relation to PD 115.

After nearly 5 years of litigation, and based on the records shown to the Honorable Court, the bank failed to establish the basic elements of ESTAFA they filed against respondent FLORANTE E. JONSAY. The court said: ***"in determining whether the accused violated the provision of the Trust Receipt Law, reference should be made to the existence of all the elements of ESTAFA under Article 315, paragraph 1(b) of the RPC. In the case at bar, an element of crime is lacking which is the attendance of damage or prejudice to another."***

The court noted that the accused Momarco is a long-time client of the bank, which was adequate reason why the latter granted Momarco an Omnibus Line. The loan was secured by real estate mortgage over two parcels of land. The Trust Receipts executed by the accused in behalf of Momarco were not only secured by the goods imported by virtue of the trust receipts, but also by the real estate mortgage executed by Momarco in favor of EIB.

When Momarco defaulted, the court noted that: ***"in fact, EIB had already forclosed the real estate mortgage" and the titles to the two parcels of land are now in the name of the bank. "Therefore, no prejudice could have been suffered by the bank."*** The Court further noted that there was admission from the accused that his company received and sold all the products covered by the trust receipts but did not remit the proceeds of the sale due to the fact that the full value of the imported goods were more than adequately covered by collaterals. The accused told the court: ***"my collateral is sufficient to cover my obligation."***

Export & Industry Bank granted MOMARCO an OMNIBUS LINE for P49 million, secured by real estate mortgage over two parcels of land with a BIR zonal value of P400 million, which EIB appraised at P99 million. The bank released only P31.70 million. This fact did not escape the attention of the court when it said: ***"Moreover, the failure on the part of MOMARCO to pay its obligations under its trust receipt obligation is not intentional and willful because these were brought about by the economic hardships which the company suffered. The fact of non-payment was never denied by the accused. The accused himself testified that the failure was attributed to the inability of the company to service its debts and to finance its subsequent importations. Momarco still had financial recourse, because it had not yet exhausted its credit line with EIB. However, the bank failed to release the additional loan application of Momarco, which it could have used to finance its importation and business operation. This aggravated the already sad financial plight of MOMARCO."***

In its Decision, the Court said it ***"understands that once in a while, a business suffers severe reverses and Momarco is not an exception. It would therefore be unfair to equate the failure of the accused to pay with intent to defraud."*** It also found that Momarco even made partial payments on the trust receipts, aside from the marginal deposits.

The Court found that the prosecution failed to prove the guilt of the accused JONSAY, and thus, ***"the accused is acquitted in Criminal Cases No. 01-1078,01-1079,01-1080,01-1081,01-1082, 01-1083 and 01-1084 for violation of Article 315 par 1(b) of the Revised Penal Code in connection with Section 132 of PD 115 or Trust Receipt Law."*** DR. FLORANTE E. JONSAY can be accessed through his email (momarco_rolf@yahoo.com) for any information pertaining to the case. He is likewise filing a damage suit against EIB.

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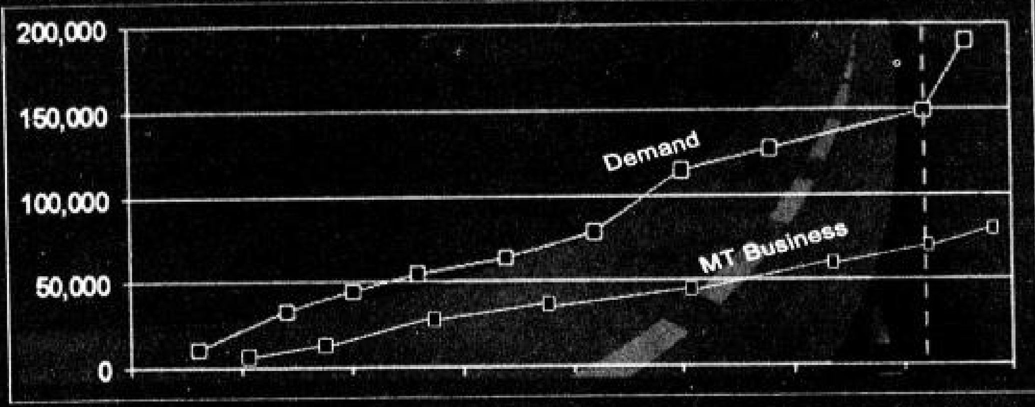

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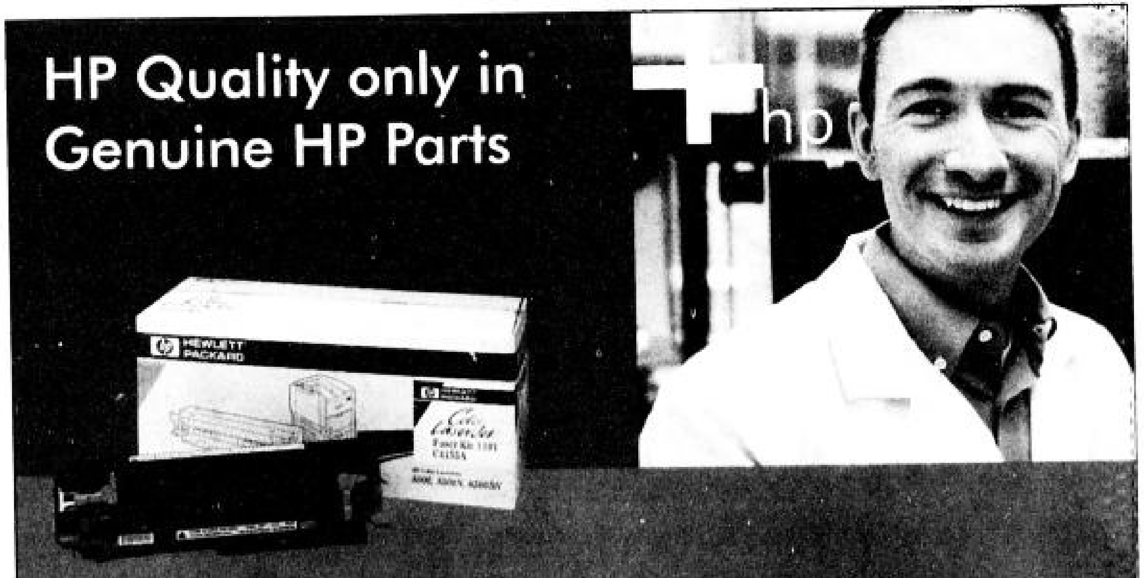

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Calls made through cellular, wi-fi convergence

By Leo Magno

BARCELONA, SPAIN—THE EMERGENCE of VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) as an alternative to traditional phone networks has long been discussed, but at the 3GSM World Congress held here, a compromise has been struck between the cellular network and wireless fidelity (wi-fi).

Word has been spreading that wireless voice calls may, in the future, be routed through Internet traffic instead of the cellular network. Through wireless local area networks (WLANS) or wi-fi, people are able to make calls via their computers. But since you cannot carry your PC around the mall or place your notebook next to your ear, wouldn't it be good to make VoIP calls using a mobile phone?

A mobile way of making calls using a converged cellular and IP network was shown at the 3GSM World Congress. A live demonstration was made by Nokia using unlicensed mobile access (UMA), where a call from a GSM network switched over to a wi-fi connection seamlessly. The hybrid GSM-WLAN phone used was the Nokia 6136.

Imagine you're at a mall or at home with a wi-fi connection. You can use the hybrid phone to make calls using VoIP. Then, when you move away from the wi-fi range, the call would be handed over, without dropping, to the GSM network used by your cell phone.

The call cost would drop dramatically since you do not pay extra minutes while in range of the wi-fi access (which, we are assuming, is already paid for). You would only pay for the minutes used when you move out of range of the wi-fi hotspot. This increases mobile service availability, decreases subscriber call cost and, for the operator, decreases the costs related to network deployment.

Hybrid or converged devices like the Nokia 6136 shows a complementary way of using VoIP and cellular, whereas before VoIP was seen as a threat to both cellular and landline. Here, we see the cellular side and the Internet side meshed together into a core network.

On the user end, you'd have an expanded range of mobility, according to Kai Oistamo, executive vice president and general manager for mobile phones at Nokia.

"You can use wi-fi where the GSM signal is weak because each wi-fi access point or base station acts as a connecting tower as if it were a cell site," he said.

If the user already has access to a wi-fi network at home or outside, wi-fi is used to include voice calls, bringing down the total call cost and optimizing the use of the hotspot.

On the operator end, said Oistamo, operators can introduce new service plans with competitive prices when the phone is used at home or at wi-fi hotspots.

"This means less cost and less congestion for operators," said Oistamo, as the traffic is rerouted through the Internet instead of through the cellular network.

This is made possible by Nokia's Unified Core Network solution for converging Internet and cellular networks, of which UMA is a key part. UMA technology enables the use of broadband and unlicensed access technologies such as wi-fi to expand mobility for users of voice and data services. It can also be an alternative approach to extending cellular indoor coverage (where signal is weak indoors) and to areas unserviced by the cellular network but have wi-fi coverage.

In the Philippines, mobile operators Smart Communications and Globe Telecom have both cellular and wireless Internet networks and could theoretically deploy such a converged GSM/wi-fi service.

"That innovation is inevitable, thus telcos have to make the most out of them for the benefit of the consumers," said Jones Campos, assistant vice president for public relations at Globe. "Affordability and superior service is also crucial. It should be easy to use."

Ramon Isberto, public affairs head of Smart, had the same concerns.

"This will be rolled out in the country but to really catch on, the technology should be easy to use," he said.

And, since wi-fi would soon allow people to use hybrid handsets to make VoIP calls, the "right business model" would help it fare better in the country, Isberto said. He added that American operator Vonage, which has been commercially offering VoIP services via mobile, has not reported significant revenues from the service.

Vonage is offering mobile calls via Internet for $14.99 a month.

"How to make money is the issue with VoIP," said Isberto.

Smart currently offers its own wi-fi service with Smart WiFi, coupled with broadband wireless networks through Meridian Telekom and the Internet services of its parent company, the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.

Globe, on the other hand, offers Internet and data services via GlobeQuest. GlobeQuest head Jesus Romero said that hybrid GSM/wi-fi phones and converged services are promising.

"We think this is good because it will expand the base of those who can use VoIP over wi-fi," said Romero.

But will the number of hotspots in the Philippines and the technology itself become an issue, bearing in mind that wi-fi was not designed to carry voice?

"The technology will not be an issue," Romero said. "If they launch that phone, operators should provide the services around it. The services should leverage on the technology."

Romero added that such a technology may actually spur the growth of wi-fi in the country.

"Wi-fi is now used mainly for browsing," he said. "With voice, it will increase the usage and the number of hotspots."

Is Globe looking at deploying such converged services?

"Definitely we will introduce it when it comes to the market," Romero said.

Elsewhere, European operator Orange has announced that it will be using the Nokia 6136 to offer a converged GSM/wi-fi service.

With a report from Erwin G. Oliva.

Mobile e-mail race heats up

By Leo Magno

BARCELONA, SPAIN—THE RACE FOR technology companies to push e-mail to your cell phones and other mobile devices took a fast turn here at the 3GSM World Congress, with Microsoft Corp., Nokia and Research in Motion (RIM) all wanting to deliver e-mail wherever you go.

Software giant Microsoft said it would provide solutions to deliver e-mail via Direct Push through Windows Mobile 5.0 and Windows Server. Nokia unveiled push e-mail plans after successfully acquiring Intellisync Corp. for $430 million. Intellisync is the rival of RIM, maker of the BlackBerry handset which started the push e-mail revolution but is facing a possible injunction stemming from a patent lawsuit filed against it by NTP Inc. This may cause sales and services for the BlackBerry to be halted in the US.

All three companies were in full force here at the 3GSM World Congress, but Microsoft was seen as the dark horse, being a non-traditional phone company seen as invading the turf of Nokia and BlackBerry.

Nokia and BlackBerry were unfazed by Microsoft's announcements that it would dominate the push e-mail market with its "more than 100" mobile device partners. These partners include makers of personal digital assistants aside from traditional cell phones.

"We will immediately start integration of Intellisync into Nokia devices through the Nokia Business Center solution," Dave Grannan, Nokia general manager for email and enterprise solutions, told Infotech. "By the third quarter Intellisync will be fully integrated and the brand dissolved."

But Nokia is not limiting its solutions to its own phones.

"This is an open system," Grannan said. "We can partner with Microsoft and even Blackberry. It could be on a Nokia platform, but if we push our e-mail to other devices we still win."

Nokia already has a partnership with BlackBerry through Blackberry Connect which allows the latter's software to be used in Nokia phones. Grannan said the partnership will not change nor affected by the acquisition of Intellisync.

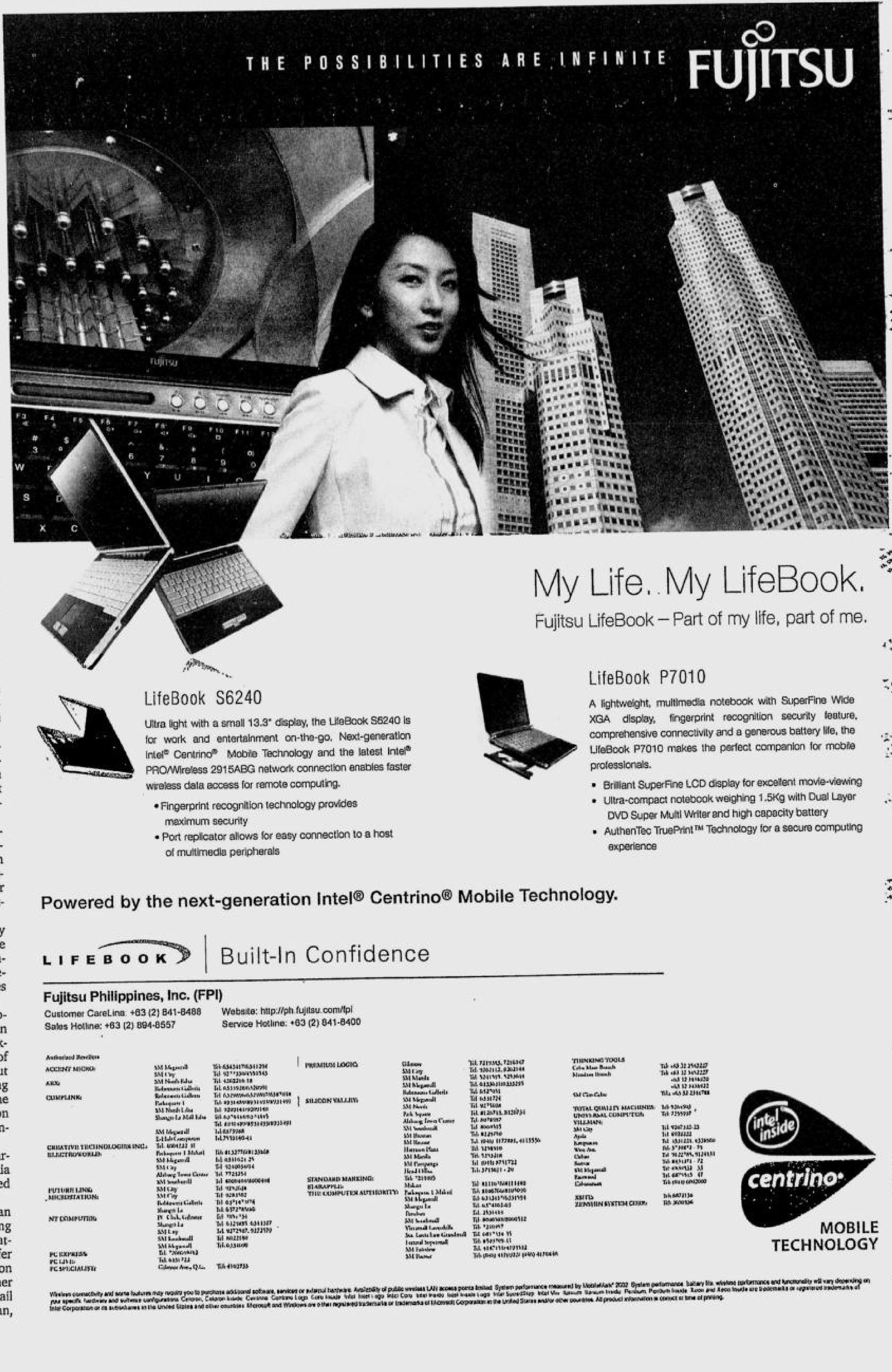
"If we could get our software into more devices then so much the better," said Clyde Foster, chief operating officer of Intellisync, in an interview. "We will support other mobile software platforms. We are already in 35 other non-Nokia platforms. Intellisync won't be exclusive on Nokia (phones)."

Meanwhile, RIM said it had contingency plans in case it loses its patent lawsuit in the United States. It said that an alternative technology will continue to make BlackBerry devices run in case the injunction pushes through.

"Remember the case will affect US subscribers, not the entire market," said Ben Travers, Europe product manager for BlackBerry, in an interview. "There will be lots of competitors out there including Microsoft, but we already have a big head start considering we pioneered this industry. At the same time we are partners of Nokia and Sony Ericsson through BlackBerry Connect so we are not limited to our hardware."

Grannan said RIM and Microsoft would target the high end of the market while Nokia could go from the entry level to sophisticated "smart phones."

In separate interviews, Travers and Grannan both said that their advantage lies on having push e-mail software based on an open platform, and that Microsoft will expectedly offer its Direct Push solution to devices running on Windows Mobile. RIM and Nokia, on the other hand, are working to make their push e-mail available to devices running on Symbian, Palm, Windows Mobile and other platforms.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RP the world's best in IT

McKinsey says Philippines low in cost, high in quality

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED service sector in the Philippines is the best in the world in terms of cost and quality of labor, but it needs to improve on international perception issues regarding the local market, according to global research and consultancy firm McKinsey.

Christopher Beshouri, president and chief executive of McKinsey Philippines, said in a report presented during the e-Services Philippines 2006 held last week that the country was clearly in a "good" position, but could become "great."

McKinsey data showed that the labor cost per hour in the Philippines was just 12 percent of what a BPO operator would spend in the United States, better than India's 13 percent.

As for the suitability of job applicants on the requirements of a firm, the Philippines bested those from Russia China and India, the data showed.

Further, the Philippines also excels in terms of the number of available workers as a percentage of total population as well as infrastructure related to information technology, real estate and transportation.

Still, Beshouri said the country could still capture an "unfair share" of the global market if it comes up with a clear strategy and program to address its weaknesses.

Beshouri recommended that the country focus on the non-voice sector or services other than call centers; to continue to attract high-profile locators; and enhance the suitability of the labor supply through investments in language education and development of skilled managers.

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BSP tightens rules on banks linked to pre-need firms

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE MONETARY BOARD OF THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas has approved tighter rules on banks acting as trustees of affiliate pre-need companies.

BSP chief legal counsel Juan de Zuniga said in a briefing that the new rules likewise limited the investments that trustee-banks could choose from.

Trustee banks affected by the new regulation would be given one year to clean up investments that do not meet the new standards set by the BSP, Zuniga added.

The new regulations require trustee banks that manage assets of affiliate firms to treat those accounts as exposure to Dosri (directors, officers, stockholders and related interests).

Among others, the General Banking Law limits banks' Dosri exposure to 15 percent of total loan portfolio.

Before the rules were issued, the BSP had no guidelines covering banks acting as trustees of related firms.

There are at least four banks with affiliate preneed firms: Bank of the Philippine Islands (Ayala Plans Inc.), Philam Savings (Philam Plans), United Coconut Planters Bank (Coco Plans Inc.) and Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. (Pacific Plans).

The BSP also narrowed down the type of investments trustee-banks could invest in. Among these are Philippine government securities, triple-A debt papers or notes guaranteed by triple-A rated issuers or other risk-free investments.

Meanwhile, Insurance Commissioner Evangeline Escobillo said the IC was willing to take the pre-need sector under its wings if mandated to do so.

"There are certain similarities with insurance products and some are even affiliated with insurance firms," she said.

Napocor readies Semirara rehab program

By Abigail L. Ho

WITH MORE THAN 33 PERCENT OF THE OIL spill-affected areas in Semirara Island cleaned up, the state-run National Power Corp. has come up with a rehabilitation plan involving the reforestation of affected mangrove areas and provision of alternative livelihood to the residents.

The state firm said its rehabilitation plan focused on sustainability and aimed to provide long-term benefits to the island's residents.

Safety audits would also be conducted on Napocor's barges, with emphasis on oil spill control, to prevent a repeat of the oil spill that contaminated areas surrounding the island.

Further research and studies on the behavior and biodegradation of spilled oil, as well as a baseline productivity valuation of Philippine mangroves and other marine ecosystems, would also be conducted.

The availability and effectivity of local materials for absorbents used for oil spill cleanup would also be studied.

Meanwhile, personnel from Napocor, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Philippine Coast Guard, as well as residents of Semirara Island continued to clean the affected areas.

To date, more than 33 percent of the 113 hectares affected by the oil spill, including the mangrove areas, had been cleaned.

Almost 31,000 sacks out of an estimated 60,000 sacks of contaminated debris and material had likewise been collected.

Of the collected sacks, more than 13,000 sacks had been transferred to the designated permanent dumpsite.

Napocor said it was also considering using bioremediation technology, which makes use of various organic materials to break down the spilled oil with no adverse effects on the environment.

E-mail: pr_business@inquirer.com.ph

BUSINESS*Monday*

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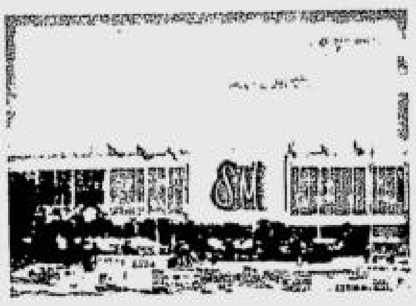

SM North: Corporate Edsa baby /B2-6

Revealing coffee industry's secret

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—MONTAÑOSA COFFEE CO. is a year-old producer of specialty coffee that is arguably the only homegrown distributor of indigenous "Cordillera arabica" beans today.

But the firm plans to stamp its imprint on the country's coffee industry when it blows the lid off the trade's most closely guarded secret.

Alipio Alonzo Castillo III, Montañosa's founder, says the firm is leading a campaign to free the Cordillera arabica from profiteers, unwelcome commercialization and irresponsible production by empowering Ibaloi, Kankanaey, Kalinga and Ifugao coffee farmers with new technologies and a brand that adds value to their crops.

"For decades, [top producers of coffee in the Philippines have monopolized the supply of] their best arabica beans which they buy raw from poor farmers in the Cordillera... [This condition thrives] because [farmers] are unaware that their arabica beans have been acknowledged by world experts as [one of the] best flavors in the world," he says.

"Save the Cordillera Arabica" is not yet a byword here, although Montañosa is trying to build a brand image by labeling their produce according to their origins—Benguet Brew, Sagada Shade-Grown Beans, Ifugao Limited Blend and Kalinga Dark Roast.

"Our campaign will break the silence about arabica. We will tell the farmers that their crops are worth more than what they now sell for, and we will help them produce better quality beans for a bigger market so they will no longer be the big companies' secret," he says.

But it's a secret that the industry itself wants to finally unveil.

Early this month, Pacita Juan, co-chair of the National Coffee Development Board alongside Negros Coffee & Grains president Nicholas Matti, led a team of German experts through the lush manmade forest inside the Coromina property in Tublay, Benguet to showcase its coffee plantations as one of the country's "best practices" in organic food production.

Juan, also chief executive officer of the Figaro Coffee Co., says showing off the forest is stage one of a grand industry plan to harness organic coffee from the Cordillera highlands, by generating a modern and profitable market chain for coffee farmers.

EV ESPIRITU/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

"SAVE the Cordillera Arabica" is the new battle cry of the local coffee industry.

The Figaro newsletter describes arabica as "the most widely known coffee [that is] considered to be the more aromatic and superior in flavor to the robusta beans," which is more acidic due to its higher caffeine content.

Juan says coffee here matures under the best of conditions. The cold climate allows coffee beans to mature gradually, nurtured by high altitudinal humidity, premium sunlight and mountain soil. Most arabica trees here also grow under thick forest cover, which lengthens the maturity period.

Juan says locally

REVEALING/ B2-2

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Man-made forest eyed as first RP organic coffee farm

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

TUBLAY, BENGUET—SEÑOR Ramon Coromina, a Spanish-Filipino who migrated to this town in 1964, saw the forest for the trees as soon as he set foot on a 24-hectare hill he had bought here.

The hill overlooks vast Ibaloi and Kankanaey vegetable terraces but absent was the pine tree canopy that characterized Benguet landscapes during that period.

So Coromina, who is known here as "Señor," set his household and his Kankanaey neighbors to work, planting by hand saplings of pine, acacia, mulberry and typica arabica coffee trees on every square inch of Coromina land, says Mateo Amando, 68, who was part of Coromina's team.

This chore took them until 1968 to complete, Amando says.

The Coromina forest will soon take center stage should it receive the country's first certification as an organic coffee farm, courtesy of the German government.

Roland Ferstl, a consultant of the Figaro Coffee Foundation Inc., has cited the forest as one of the local industry's "best practices" in Luzon.

Ferstl has lined it up for organic certification by Naturland, a German industry body that supports organic food by providing guarantee seals to mainstream organic products all over Europe.

Ferstl and Pacita Juan, Figaro chief executive officer, toured the forest last month.

Sipping coffee under pine trees, Juan says the manmade forest embodies all that is right about Cordillera arabica.

Most of these coffee farms in the Cordillera are 50 years old, which testifies to their organic nature, says Ferstl, because poverty prevents many farmers from spending on chemical fertilizers to make the trees bear fruits.

But getting the farmers to cooperate and building economical and efficient coffee farms is a matter that requires role models, says Juan.

Coromina had always been a community influence, says Amando, who is now the forest's caretaker.

In a period when environmental crusades were not yet popular, Coromina spoke to his Ibaloi and Kankanaey neighbors about "building a forest to keep the whole hill from collapsing," Amando says.

Throughout his lifetime, Coromina had become a hometown critic, arguing against new programs that threaten the local environment, says Amando.

At first glance, he says, "Señor" may have even been right about the fragility of the community's ecology.

To reach the Coromina property, people still need to hike or drive through a narrow mud road, that is painstakingly carved from the bare mountainside after every storm. The forest roots have been sturdy enough to control small creeks that collect near the Coromina property, and which flow down the hill.

The cliffs, where the access road is perched, are pockmarked with pocket mines, so the family is at the forefront of a fight to keep mines away from this part of Benguet.

Earlier, the Coromina children fought off a Philippine mining firm, which had planned to include portions of Tublay villages in a new venture, by winning a suit in court.

The coffee trees that originally grew beneath the Coromina pine cover are nearly 20 feet tall, and thus too high to harvest.

So Lupe, one of Coromina's daughters, asked Amando to plant 4,000 new coffee trees which the caretaker now prunes and harvests every start of the year.

"It takes me and my children three months to complete harvesting three tons of beans," Amando says.

Keeping with the pristine organic lifestyle here, Amando peels his harvest using a makeshift instrument, made of scrap wood, vehicle parts and aluminum water pipes, before the beans were roasted.

VINCENT CABREZA, PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

MATEO Amando has been growing coffee since he was a boy.

Revealing . . .

From page B2-1

grown arabica is also precious because backyard tree farms in the Cordillera can only produce 1,725 metric tons. The Philippines has a yearly supply shortfall of 35,000 metric tons, and 90 percent of what is local produced for the market is robusta.

Figaro has spearheaded a campaign to revive the Philippine Liberica bean, or barako, but since 2004, it had also launched a marketing campaign for organic coffee, according to Zarah Perez, who organizes Cordillera cooperatives for the Figaro Coffee Foundation.

But on their first foray into Benguet, they were forced to confront some sins of the past.

As early as the 1970s, big coffee chains and manufacturers solicited coffee supplies from local farmers along the so-called Mountain Trail, only to drop them when they failed to supply the firms with beans according to specifications, Castillo says.

The Mountain Trail is a reference to Halsema Highway, which leads to coffee farms in Benguet, Mt. Province and Ifugao. Perez has also been negotiating with coffee farmers in Kalinga.

Castillo says arabica was probably introduced to the region when Spaniards began foraging for gold in Benguet, but coffee never became a traditional crop, and is thus grown only because coffee trees flourish in the mountains.

Government tried to reopen this marketing chain through special agricultural projects like the Central Cordillera Agricultural Program (Cecap), says Jorge Salinas, a University of the Philippines Baguio political science instructor, who wrote a paper on the local coffee trade.

But technologies and training in agro-management were "imposed, rather than taught to cooperatives," Salinas says, and a supply group that was revived "simply collapsed back to idleness when no one was looking."

Juan says farmers began to respond to Figaro when it started to buy the crops at mainstream prices.

"*Ganyan naman ang* Filipino farmers. They need a model… because they always say, 'Oh, no. Here's another bright idea.' But when they actually saw us buying the organically grown coffee… well, Zarah [Perez] is now more popular here than Sharon Cuneta," she says.

Figaro's presence is meant to jumpstart a region-wide organic food consciousness, Juan says, but getting organic certification for Cordillera coffee will accelerate the expansion of modern arabica farms here.

The German Development Service is interested in providing organic certification for most indigenous Filipino farms here, which are "organic by default," because farmers are unable to invest in chemical fertilizers for coffee trees that previously had no economic value, said Roland Ferstl, a German coffee expert who is helping Figaro in training local farmers.

Lydia Ramos pounding dried Arabica coffee beans at Barangay Pinsao, Baguio City. She sells her coffee beans at P95 a kilo.

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DAY 1 (February 23, 2006/ 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.)
PCE Recognition of Outstanding Entrepreneurship Teachers / Students / Programs by PCE • FORUM 1: Building National Confidence and Optimism To Inspire More Successful Filipino Entrepreneurs · Moderators: Rico Hizon & Anna Marie Periquet · Panelists: Socorro Ramos, Hon. Jose Concepcion III, Dr. Rolando Hortaleza, Atty. Felipe Gozon, Vivienne Tan, Henry Lim Bon Liong, Rodrigo Rivera, Marixi Prieto*, Grace Glory Go • LUNCH BREAK TOPIC: Feng Shui Master Charlie Chao's Business Outlook • FORUM 2: A Global Market Beckons The Filipino Entrepreneur · Panelists: Dennis Mendiola, Dr. Paco Sandejas, Guillermo Luchangco, Ben Colayco, Menardo Jimenez Jr. • FORUM 3: Uncommon Heroes for the Common Good · Panelists:Dr. Justin Arboleda, Francisco Colayco, Ray Gapuz Jr., Rina Lopez-Bautista*, Dylan Wilk, Gerry Geronimo* • Breeding The Entrepreneurial Mindset and Culture By Raju Mandhyan • FORUM 4: New Approaches in Entrepreneurship Education • CULMINATING FORUM: Triggering the Age of Entrepreneurship in the Philippines · Panelists:Sec. Arthur Yap, Sec. Estrella Alabastro, Chairman Carlito Puno, OIC/Secretary Fe Hidalgo, Undersecretary Zorayda Amelia Alonzo, Executive Director Gondelina Amata, Gov. Luis Raymund F. Villafuerte*, Linda Wirth*, Johnlu Koa, Prof. Josephine Aguilar

DAY 2 (February 24, 2006/ 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.)
Opening Ceremonies Cutting of Ribbon:VP Noli de Castro, Sen.Manuel Villar, Sen. Manuel Roxas II,Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr.,Sen. Francis Pangilinan, Cong.Wilhelmino Alvarado, Mayor Rosendo Capco, Mayor Freddie Tinga, Government Officials, Partner Organizations • International Workshop on Technopreneurship · Conducted by: Prof. Patrick Chan · HOST: DOST • Business Plan Competition Brief: PCE/PESO, CFBC, ENEDA, JCI, HSBC, TIES, ONIA, GEN-P • Easy Tips on How to Start a Retail Business and How to Supply to Retailers · By: Steven T. Cua • "Elevator Pitch" Exhibition by Business Plan Contest Winners & Runners-up • Funding Options for Outstanding Business Plans • Easy on the pocket Business Ideas By: Food Cart Association of the Philippines • Awarding of PCE-ENEDA Cup Winners • GO NEGOSYO Concert with Orange and Lemons at the Central Plaza, Market! Market!

DAY 3 (February 25, 2006/ 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.)
The Franchise Boom: Now is the Time to Get Started By: Association of Filipino Franchisers Inc. • International Workshop on Technopreneurship · Conducted by: Prof. Patrick Chan · HOST: DOST • Franchise Your Business An Option for Growth · By: Philippine Franchise Association • The Entrepreneur: Know Thyself · By: Lex Ledesma • Finding Your Opportunity of a Lifetime: Where do Entrepreneurs Get Their Ideas · By: Jay Bernardo • Moving Innovations to Market · By: Maoi Arroyo • The Essentials of a Successful Business Start-up · By: Joel Santos • FORUM: Financing Programs that Work · Moderator: Mau Bolante · Panelists: National Livelihood Support Fund, Personal Bank Loan providers, ABS-CBN Bayan Microfinance Foundation, Pawnshops, Cooperatives • Safeguarding and Optimizing Your Intellectual Capital · By: Intellectual Property Office

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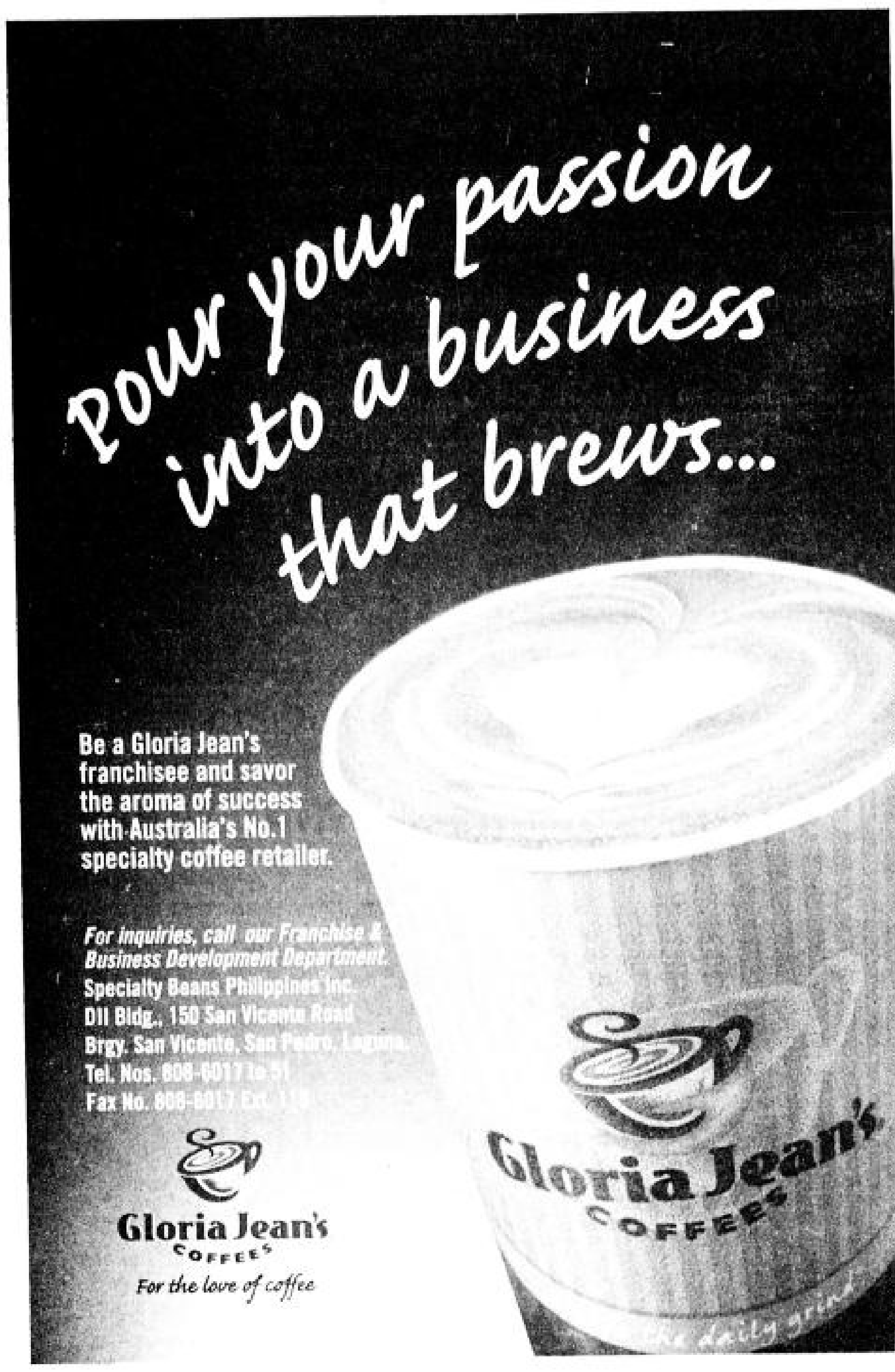

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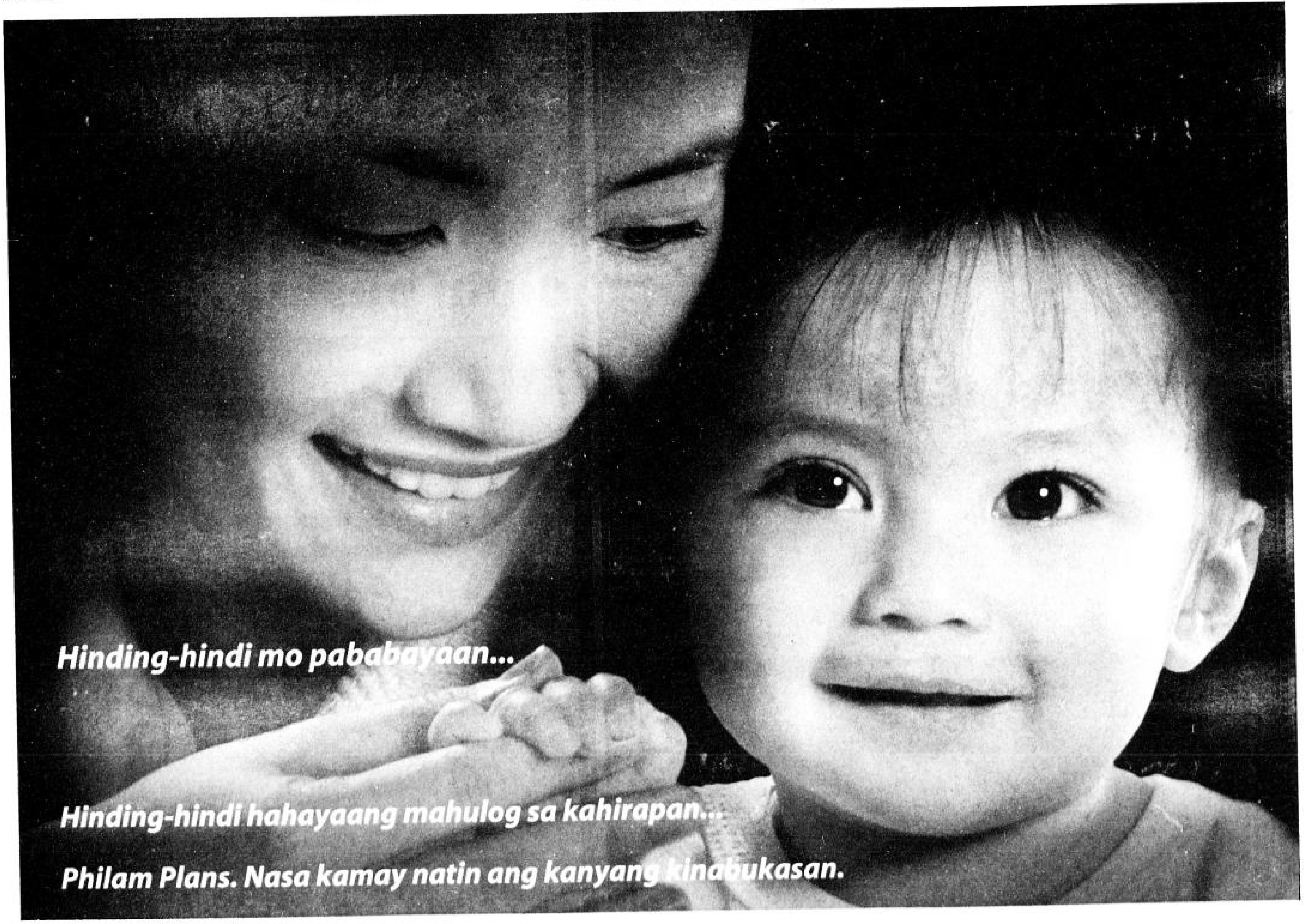
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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

1. The Privatization and Management Office ("PMO"), through its Bids and Awards Committee ("PMO-BAC"), intends to procure the services of a financial advisor ("FA") in connection with the privatization of the 55% of the share of stock of Philippine Postal Corp. ("Philpost") under a success fee arrangement.

   The Approved Budget for the Contract ("ABC") is FOUR MILLION PESOS (P 4M), to be paid by the PMO and chargeable against the success fee which shall not exceed .75% of the total sales proceeds from the privatization of the 55% shares of stock of Philpost.

   The fees for the FA shall be payable as follows:

PHASE	DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES	FEES
I-Valuation	Preparation of valuation and appraisal report, information memorandum and privatization plan	Not to exceed Four Million Pesos (P4M)
II-Implementation	Implementation of the privatization plan, as approved by the Privatization Council	Not to exceed .75% of the sales proceeds, less the fee paid for the Valuation Phase

2. The PMO now calls for the submission of Letters of Intent ('LOIs") from potential bidders to apply for eligibility and short listing for Financial Advisor Services. Interested FAs must submit their LOIs on or before 22 February 2006 from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm, by hand, to the Bids and Awards Committee, Privatization and Management Office, 104 Gamboa St., Legaspi Village, Makati City and secure the Eligibility Documents and Shortlisting Requirements therefrom for a minimal fee of P5,000.00.

   Applications for eligibility will be evaluated on a non-discretionary "pass/fail" basis. The last day for submission of the accomplished Eligibility Documents and Short Listing Requirements shall be on the date of the Opening of Eligibility Documents on 27 February 2006, 10:00 a.m. at the 6th Floor, 104 Gamboa St., Legaspi Village, Makati City. Only those found eligible shall be considered for short listing and only those that are short listed will be entitled to submit bids.

3. The PMO-BAC shall draw up the short list of FAs from those who have submitted LOIs and have been determined as eligible both in accordance with the provisions of Republic Act No. 9184 ("RA 9184") and its Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A ("IRR-A"). The short list of prospective bidders shall not exceed five (5) FAs. The criteria and rating system for short listing are:
   - a. 30% — General experience of the FA, considering both the overall experience of the firm and the individual experience of the principal and key staff, including relevant experience of the principal and key staff from previous employment;
   - b. 30% — Privatization experience of the FA;
   - c. 20% — Qualifications of personnel who may be assigned to the project;
   - d. 20% — Dealings of the FA with the Philippine Government.

   The passing rate to be eligible is 70%.

4. In accordance with the IRR-A of RA 9184, bidding for the hiring of an FA will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures. Only bids from short listed FAs will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in the Eligibility Documents to be obtained from the PMO. The contract will only be awarded to the Highest Rated and Responsive Bidder, who was determined as such during post-qualification.

   The PMO-BAC shall evaluate bids using the ***Quality-Cost Based Evaluation*** procedure. The criteria and rating system for the evaluation of bids shall be provided in the Instructions to Bidders to be obtained from the PMO.

5. Interested FAs may obtain the eligibility and short listing requirements, and the other bidding documents, from the PMO-BAC at the address given below from Mondays to Fridays, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The deadline for submission of bids from the short listed FAs shall be on 15 March 2006, 10:00 a.m.

6. The PMO/PMO-BAC reserves the right to reject any and all bids, waive any formality in the bid requirements, declare the bidding a failure, annul the bidding process without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders, and award the contract to the bidder whose bid is most advantageous to the Government.

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Website: www.pmo.gov.ph

(Sgd.) **CRISANTA S. LEGASPI**
Deputy Privatization Officer and
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(PDI – February 13 & 20, 2006)

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

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The bidding documents shall be available to interested bidders/suppliers at the BAC Secretariat Office, Rm. 401, 4/F Senate of the Philippines, GSIS Building, Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City from **1:30 PM to 6:00 PM, February 27 to March 2 and March 6-9, 2006** upon payment of non-refundable fee as indicated above. Liquidated damages of Php 1,000.00 or 1/10 of one percent (1%) of the unperformed portion, whichever is higher, for each day of delay shall be imposed on the printer for failure to deliver on said deadline. **The pre-bidding conference shall be held on March 14, 2006, 10:00 AM** at the Office of the Deputy Secretary for Administrative and Financial Services, Rm. 408, 4th Floor, Senate of the Philippines, GSIS Building, Pasay City.

All particulars relative to the eligibility, bid evaluation, and award of contract shall be governed by the provisions of R.A. 9184 otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act. **LATE BIDS SHALL NOT BE ACCEPTED.**

This Invitation is also advertised with the Government Electronic Procurement System (G-EPS) at www.procurementservice.org. and posted at the 4th Floor Senate bulletin board.

For more information, please call the BAC Secretariat Office at telefax no. 552-6601 local 1602 (c/o Rose de Castro).

THE SENATE OF THE PHILIPPINES RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REVIEW ALL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS, REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, WAIVE ANY DEFECTS CONTAINED THEREIN AND ACCEPT THE OFFER MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE GOVERNMENT, AND THE RIGHT TO CONFISCATE THE BID BOND AND/OR PURSUE APPROPRIATE LEGAL ACTION SHOULD THE WINNING BIDDER REFUSE TO ACCEPT THE AWARD.

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(Sgd.) **ATTY. ARNEL JOSE S. BAÑAS**
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI – February 20 & 26, 2006)

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Internet fraud

Corporate Securities Info
Raul J. Palabrica

MOVE OVER ENCYCLOPEDIAS, almanacs and other reference materials, the World Wide Web or Internet is now the preferred source of information for those who have access to this gizmo.

The wealth of knowledge available in cyberspace and the speed by which it can be secured have given this latest technology an aura of credibility and reliability.

This reputation has not escaped the attention of con artists who thrive on the gullibility or carelessness of some people in the handling of their money.

Boiler room operators, or people who sell worthless stocks or securities to the unwary and ignorant, have found in the Internet an effective medium to engage in their criminal activities.

For these modern day felons, telephone solicitations and flyers have outlived their usefulness. The "caller ID" mechanism has made tracking and barring nuisance telephone calls a lot easier.

Courier companies no longer accept anonymous requests for delivery of mail or packages. They now require their clients to present credible identification papers before they accept their orders.

Solicitation

With the clever use of computer graphics, sounds and other forms of special effects, scam artists are able to catch the attention of Internet users to their illegal wares.

Getting the e-mail address of the potential victims is not a problem because the information is, for a few dollars, available right within the Web itself.

It also helps (that is, from the criminal's point of view) that there is no local or international regulatory system that monitors and enforces the proper use of cyberspace.

Internet users who get solicitations to buy securities or financial instruments issued by foreign and local companies should bear in mind that the fact that something is being promoted, sold or distributed through the Internet does not make it more legitimate than any other investments.

To make their pitch more convincing, the scam artists post supposedly recorded messages of well-known personalities, complete with their smiling photos, telling how good the offered securities are and how much they've earned from investing in them.

Persistence

Another persuasion device used is giving the toll-free number of a "financial counselor or advisor" whom the targeted person can talk to any time at his convenience to answer questions about those securities.

Woe to anyone who makes the mistake of dialing that number.

If he refuses to succumb to the solicitation, his e-mail address will be bombarded with spam (or unsolicited messages) and his telephone will get automatic pre-timed and pre-recorded messages urging him to change his mind.

Worse, if the targeted prey disclosed his address, his mailbox will be filled with letters and flyers explaining the virtues of investing in the con artists' investment instruments.

With call centers operating all over the world, tracing the identity and location of the persistent solicitor would be an exercise in futility.

To avoid further aggravation, the victim is forced to change his e-mail address and telephone number. Then, he has to go through the tedious process of informing his relatives, friends and clients, if any, about his new numbers.

Caveat

As in all kinds of frauds, the bad guys take advantage of the element of "greed" that is believed to underlie every human being.

The thought of earning lots of money, by way of high returns on investments, with the least effort has made some people susceptible to the machinations of these perpetrators of fraud.

Internet users who may accidentally find themselves in the radar screen of this latest edition of con artists should bear in mind the age-old dictum in investments: if it looks too good to be true, it probably is.

Before replying to an e-mail solicitation or dialing the number of the suggested financial advisor, it is advisable to download the material first and show it to somebody who is knowledgeable about securities investments for his review.

If the latter does not find anything wrong with the scheme, fine, go ahead and invest. Otherwise, go back to your computer and delete that spam from your file.

Word of caution in case the investment is done by credit card: Once you disclose your credit card number, you open yourself to the possibility of its being "hijacked" by computer hackers who buy products through the Internet.

The Internet is a good source of information. But there is no stopping garbage from being uploaded to it and circulated to the unwary.

Caveat emptor. Let the buyer beware. *(For feedback, please write to <rpalabrica@inquirer. com. ph>.)*

Wedding symposium set

WEDDING GURU RITA NERI (OF THE WEDDING STORE) IS SET TO hold a wedding symposium on March 26, 2006, Sunday, at the Turf Room of the Manila Polo Club in Makati.

Neri will conducting the one-day symposium together with the best of the wedding industry's suppliers. Subject matters ranging on how to choose the best suppliers for cakes, flowers, photography, attire, etc. will be discussed by noted experts in their field such as Rajo Laurel, Patrick Uy, Penk Ching, Jun Hen, Dominic Velasco, Noky Gatmaitan, Ed Pasamba.

Not designed as a typical bridal fair where interaction is limited and contrived, the symposium offers couples the unique experience of being able to interact and discuss with these resource speakers on any and all matters pertaining to preparations for their big day.

Registration is now ongoing. Interested couples can register by calling (632) 893-0534 / 840-1897 or via Email: theweddingstore@yahoo.com. Visit our website: www.theweddingstoremla.com

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OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN
Agham Road,Diliman, Quezon City

BULLETIN OF VACANT POSITIONS

In Compliance with RA 7041

GENERAL SERVICES DIVISION

1. **ENGINEER III – Item Nos. OMBA-ENG3-44-2004; OMBA-ENG3-45-2004; OMBA-ENG3-46-2004; SG 19 (3 Positions)**
Education: Bachelor's degree in Engineering relevant to the job; Experience: 2 years of relevant experience; Training: 8 hours of relevant training; Eligibility: RA 1080

2. **ENGINEER IV – Item No. OMBA ENG4-43-2004; SG 22**
Education: Bachelor's degree in Engineering relevant to the job; Experience: 3 years of relevant experience; Training: 16 hours of relevant training; Eligibility: RA 1080

Applicants should submit within ten (10) calendar days from the date of this publication to the Human Resource Management Division at the above address, the following requirements:

1) A letter stating the position applied for;
2) Duly accomplished Personal Data Sheet (CSC Form 212);
3) 1"x1" picture (colored)
4) *Bar/Board Rating or CSC Certificate of Eligibility;
5) *Transcript of Records;
6) *Certificates of Seminars/Training attended;
7) *Service Records or Certificates from previous/present employers stating the positions assumed and corresponding actual duties and responsibilities (if applicable)
8) *Performance Appraisal Reports for the last two rating periods (for current government employees only);
9) Statement duly signed by the applicants as to any relative(s) within the fourth degree of consanguinity or affinity, currently employed with the Office of the Ombudsman.

*Where photocopies are filed, the documents must be certified as true copies by the proper authorities or the applicant may present the originals to the Human Resource Management Officer for comparison with the photocopies.

(PDI- February 20, 2006)

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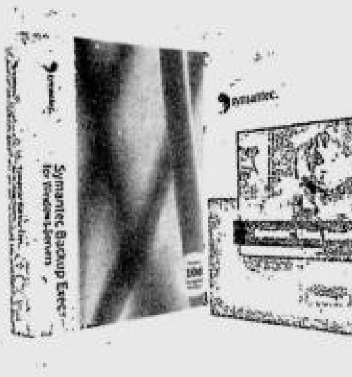

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No.0937 Series of 2006

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BUSINESS Monday

SM NORTH EDSA today (above) and when it opened (right).

SM North Edsa: 'Corporate EDSA baby'

EDSA BABIES REFER TO CHILdren born during or after the people's revolution that ousted Ferdinand Marcos as president of the Philippines.

"Corporate Edsa babies" are establishments that began operations in 1986. We look back at an establishment that opened its doors almost at the same time as the Edsa revolution, which happened 20 years ago.

SM North Edsa's City Center started operations in in late 1985 amid all the political and economic uncertainties facing the country.

When taipan Henry Sy bought a huge piece of grassland in Quezon City in the early 1980s and built a mall on it, people thought he had gone mad.

In a speech to members of the Management Association of the Philippines, Sy daughter, Tessie said:

"When we constructed our first mall in North-Edsa in 1983, the Philippines was in the midst of a debt moratorium, drastic devaluation, and experiencing hyper inflation. The economy decline was further aggravated by the assassination of Ninoy Aquino.

Many bankers predicted our demise because Henry Sy came from nowhere. He may have had a few department stores and shoe stores, but he was not one of the financial heavyweights at that time.

Unaffected by criticism and armed with sheer determination and optimism, he persisted and opened in 1985 with our department store and supermarket and a few tenants."

Today, nobody can question Henry Sy's decision. From a City Center, SM North has added two annex buildings and a car park building.

"Mr. Henry Sy, Sr. already had a vision of how that area will develop in the future as the property location is right in front of Edsa, cuts through the intersections of West Avenue and Edsa and is very proximate to Caloocan, Fairview, Commonwealth, Diliman which were also starting to boom at that time. As envisioned by Mr. Sy, SM North Edsa started the "malling phenomenon" and by early 90s, management already completed the expansion by opening the SM Carpark Building and the SM Annex to accommodate a bigger market," says Jeffrey C. Lim, VP for Finance and Administration, SM Prime Holdings Inc. *By Margie Quimpo-Espino*

Hotel weathers political and economic turmoil

By Germelina A. Lacorte
PDI Mindanao Bureau

DAVAO CITY—ON THE WALL OF MARCO Polo Davao's spacious lobby, near the elevator door opposite the ground floor check-in counter, are framed messages of three past and present presidents of the country.

"Go! Go! Go!" wrote former President Fidel V. Ramos in his trademark handwriting on April 27, 1998, when the 16-story hotel finally opened along Claveria St. here and claimed the title of being the city's tallest landmark.

Next to Ramos' handwriting, was another framed message written a year later.

"Here at last and happy!" wrote Vice President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, who was at the hotel on Nov. 26, 1999.

"Nice to be back here!" she wrote again as president on Feb. 22, 2001, a few weeks after the revolt that forced Joseph Estrada out of office.

Former Cory Aquino drew a rose and affixed her signature on a piece of paper. It was dated, Feb. 23, 2001, a day after Arroyo's arrival.

Marco Polo Davao is the first hotel put up by the Hong Kong-based Marco Polo Group in the country through the Davao Halifax Hotel Inc.

It withstood recent political and economic storms, changes of administration and even the travel advisories issued against Mindanao in particular.

Opening a year after the 1997 Asian financial crisis, the hotel continues to stand up against adverse developments like the twin bombings that rocked Davao in 2003 and the Valentine day bombing two years later.

The Department of Tourism (DOT) said Marco Polo has consistently posted the highest occupancy rate among the hotels of its type in the region.

"Despite its price and larger number of rooms to fill, Marco Polo continued to top in occupancy and average room rate," Art Boncato, Marco Polo sales and marketing director, says.

He adds the hotel has also been posting the highest yield—or income earned per room—in this part of the country.

Boncato says tourists come to the hotel because of the Marco Polo brand, which is known in Asia. Marco Polo has hotels in Hong Kong, China and Vietnam.

The claims of the Marco Polo officials have been found true by global research group Synovate.

During the last three quarters, Synovate collated data including customers' rating performance from the time of arrival at the hotel to the quality of room and services and report it as part of the in-house quarterly evaluation among the Marco Polo Group of Hotels.

The Synovate survey showed that Marco Polo Davao has consistently made it to the top.

Marco Polo Davao offers 245 rooms, suites and function rooms and other amenities.

On its top two floors, the Continental Club offers the most luxurious accommodations for business executives, offering additional hotel services and facilities with a private lounge.

"As Davao's tallest building, Marco Polo is one of the city's landmarks, a symbol of modern Davao," Boncato said.

According to Boncato, the hotel has been introducing new things to Davao city like the different food festivals it holds every year.

Currently, it is hosting the two-week long Culinary Canadiana 2006, which opened last Feb. 9.

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1 Deposito Mo, MILYON ang PANALO! Raffle Promo part 2

1st Prize

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From left to right: Sergio Ortiz-Luis, Jr., Exportbank Chairman; Arleen Mejia, 1st Prize winner; and Benjamin P. Castillo, Exportbank Vice Chairman and President.

From left to right: Eddie Ong, Exportbank Relationship Manager; Feliciano Pecson, Exportbank Region Head; Sergio Ortiz-Luis, Jr., Exportbank Chairman; Arleen Mejia, 1st Prize winner; Desmond Stanley Chua, consolation prize winner, Metro Manila area; Rey Mallari, and wife, Angelita Mallari, 3rd prize winner, Luzon area; Benjamin P. Castillo, Exportbank Vice Chairman and President; and Marcelo A. Mirasol, Jr., Exportbank Executive Vice President.

From left to right: Sergio Ortiz-Luis, Jr., Exportbank Chairman; Rey Mallari, and wife, Angelita Mallari, 3rd prize winner, Luzon area; and Benjamin P. Castillo, Exportbank Vice Chairman and President.

From left to right: Sergio Ortiz-Luis, Jr., Exportbank Chairman; Desmond Stanley Chua, consolation prize winner, Metro Manila area; and Benjamin P. Castillo, Exportbank Vice Chairman and President.

List of winners:

Major prize: Arleen Mejia, 1st prize, Angeles City; Aileen Pe, 2nd prize, Manila City, Metro Manila; Josefa Veloso Oropesa, 2nd prize, Cebu City; Song Bok Tan &/or Josefina Tan, 2nd prize, Angeles City; Desmond Stanley Chua, 3rd prize, Manila City, Metro Manila; Jun Sang Shin, 3rd prize, Mandaue City, Cebu; Rey Mallari &/or Angelita Mallari, 3rd prize, Pampanga.

Consolation prize: Nomelito Santos, Cabanatuan City; Romeo Salamat, Calamba City, Laguna; Jin Gu Park, Angeles City; Danilo Deen, Jr., Cebu City; Patronilo Larraboster &/or Mary Mae Sebastian/Jesus Sebastian, Davao City; Bernarda Selma, Cebu City; Jane Alexia Gelberg, Makati City, Metro Manila; Antonio Bayot or Antonio JC Bayot or Ma. Luisa Bayot, Muntinlupa City, Metro Manila; Ma. Asuncion Isidro or Maila Macabulos, Metro Manila; Raulito Magpantay, San Pedro, Laguna.

CONGRATULATIONS to all the 2nd RAFFLE DRAW WINNERS!

Exportbank held the 2nd Preliminary Draw of the "Deposito Mo P1-Million ang Panalo" Raffle promo Part 2 at the Exportbank Lower Lobby Hall, Exportbank Plaza last December 15, 2005. Cash prizes were given away to a total of seventeen lucky winning depositors from Luzon, Metro Manila and Vizmin areas under the supervision of Mr. Ferdinand Manfoste, Assistant Regional Director for Department of Trade and Industry, National Capital Region

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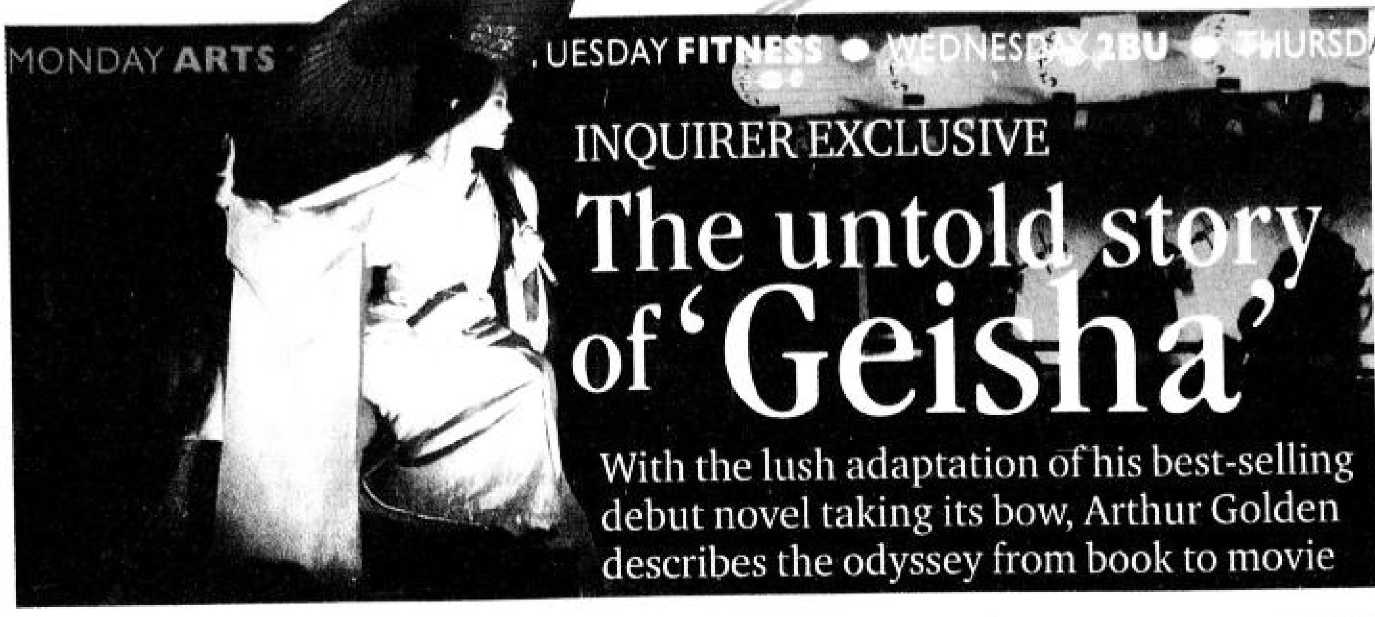


INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

The untold story of 'Geisha'

With the lush adaptation of his best-selling debut novel taking its bow, Arthur Golden describes the odyssey from book to movie

GONG LI (foreground) as washout geisha Hatsumomo

By Ruel S. De Vera

IT IS AN ENDLESS CORRIDOR filled with the slither of silk kimonos and days unfolding like paper fans. "It is an exotic and intriguing world. It's quite beautiful to see," Arthur Golden writes. Though it would be easy to surmise that he is referring to the 1920s Kyoto inhabited by the geisha Sayuri in his novel, "Memoirs of a Geisha," he is actually swooning over the motion-picture adaptation by "Chicago" director Rob Marshall that stars Ziyi Zhang as Sayuri. He shares his excitement and reflects on the journey of "Geisha" from page to screen in this exclusive e-mail interview with the INQUIRER.

Originally from Chattanooga, Tennessee, Golden attended Harvard, where he studied art history, particularly Japanese art. He would go on to earn a Master's in Japanese History from Columbia. Golden explains that he does not possess a fascination for Japan more than he does for any other culture. "I began studying Japan in college originally because I was intrigued by the language," he says. "I'll admit that when I was 19 or 20, I went through a brief love affair with Japan, but since then I've been far more of a realist. There are things about Japan I love and things about it that drive me crazy. I would say the same about the United States."

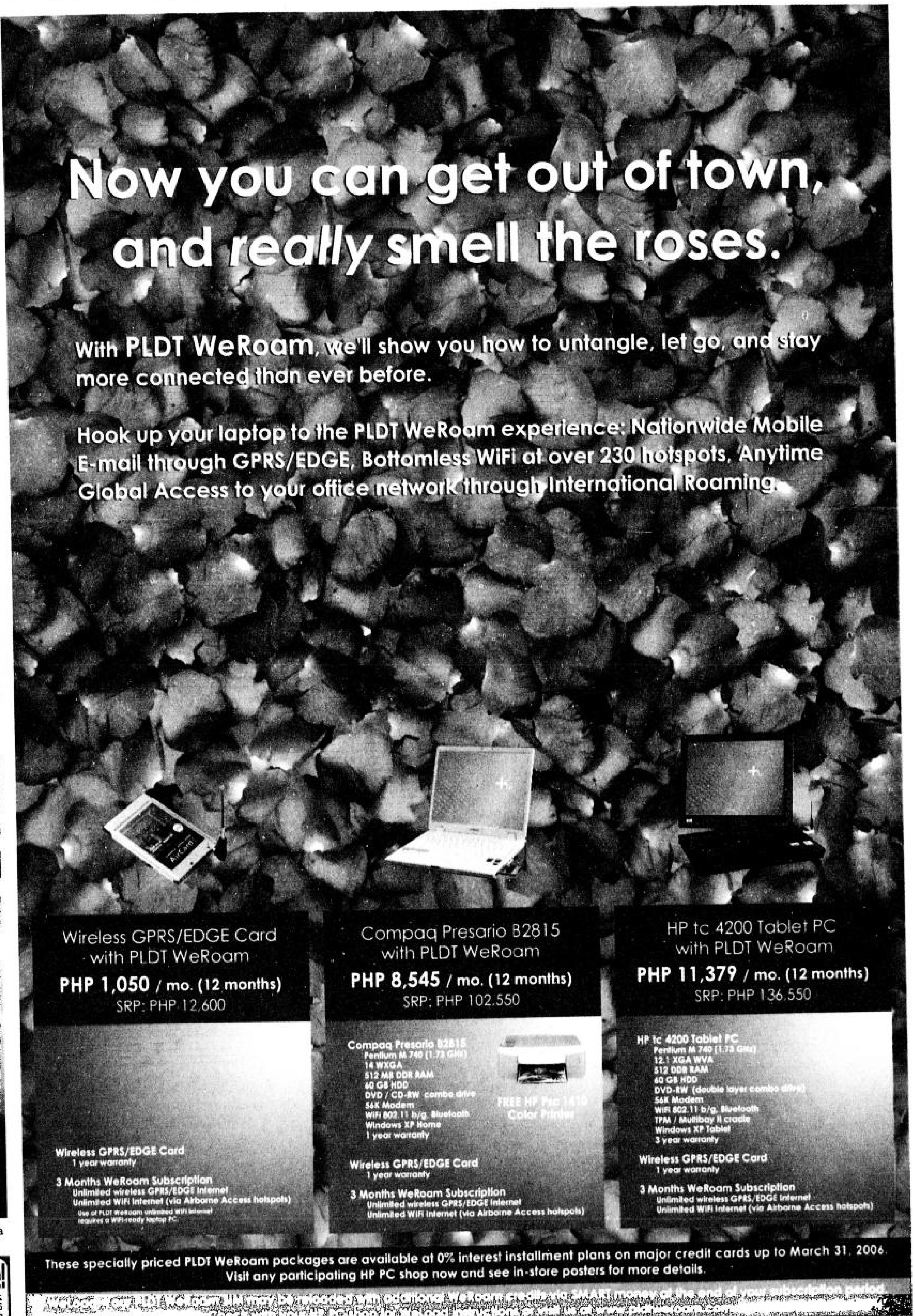
After a brief sojourn in Beijing, Golden moved to Tokyo. There, he met a man whose mother had been a geisha, something he thought would make for a good book. That led to the idea of writing a novel and "Geisha" began to evolve, though the gestation process was most delicate. After three years, he had produced a 750-page draft derived mostly from what he had read in books.

Interview with a geisha

Just as he was revising this massive draft, he got a call from a friend in Japan who found some geisha for Golden to interview. "As it turned out, the interviews I conducted with these geisha revolutionized my understand-

THE UNTOLD/ C4

ZIYI ZHANG as Sayuri, the blue-eyed geisha



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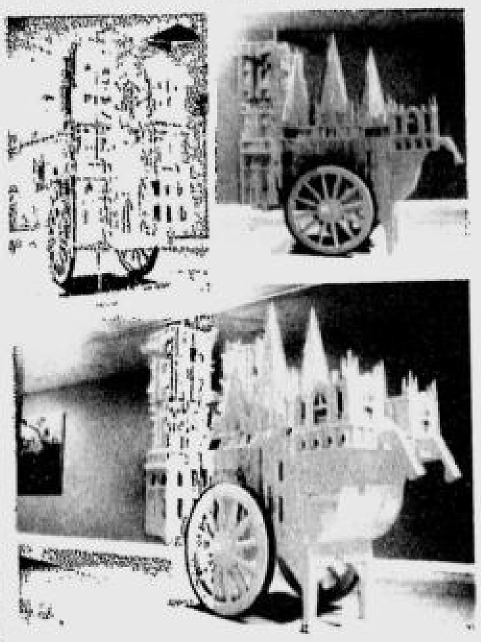
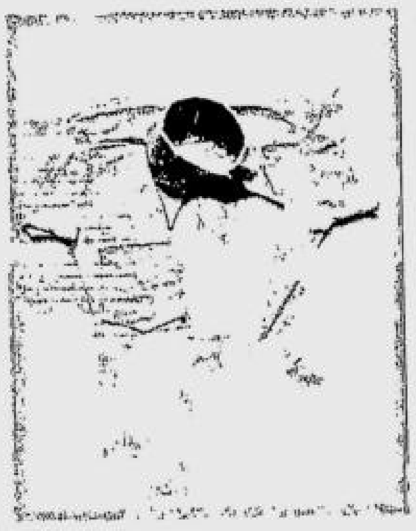
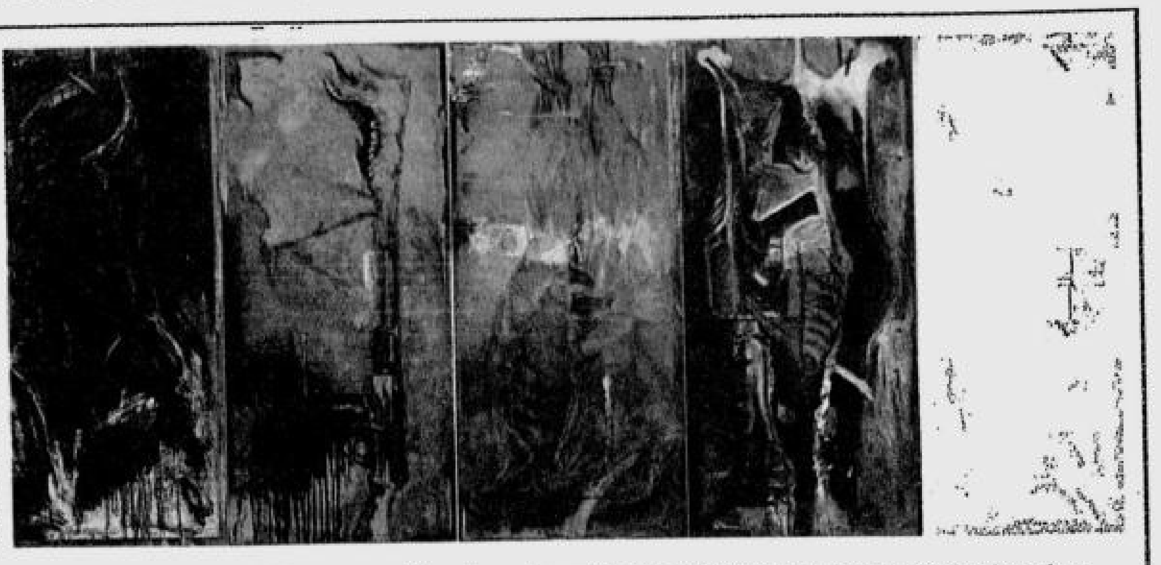
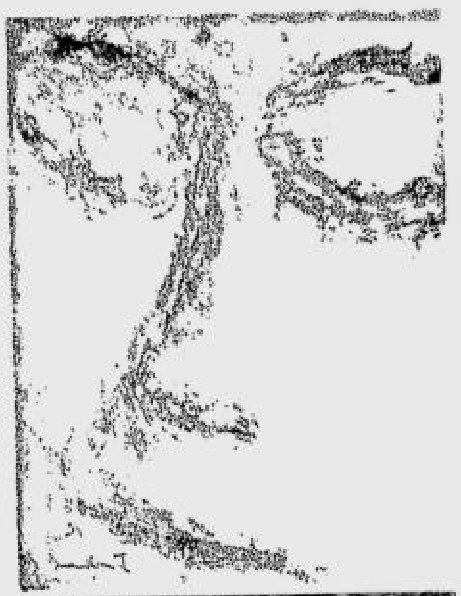


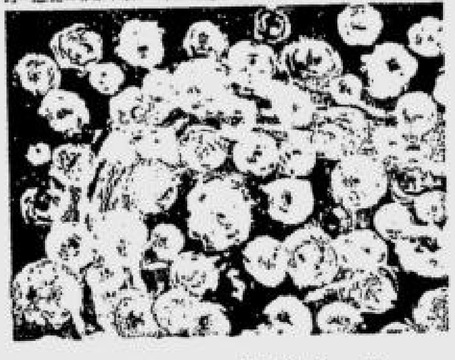


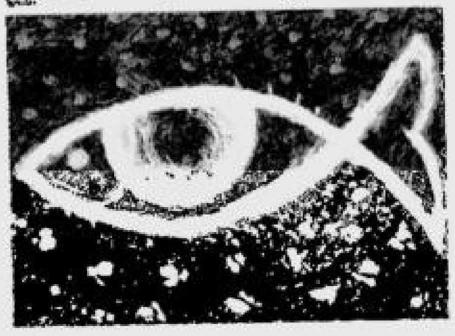


JOSÉ TENCE RUIZ'S retrospective, "BoDeGa (Bago't Dating Gawa)," will open on Feb. 24 at the SM Art Center (4/L SM Megamall). Presented by the Finale Art File, the show covers 30 years of furious creativity in different media (oil and acrylic, ink on paper, sculpture, mixed media and digital format). Grounded by social realism and nourished by self-reflexiveness, Ruiz's works involve a close examination of the world, initially implicating events which then evolve into a creative and critical observation of the self. His works show versatility, inventiveness and insight. "BoDeGa" runs until March 12. Call 6342411.

Hiraya features Indonesia-based Modesto







CLOCKWISE from top left: "Solemn," "An Angel through the Window," "Flowers for Buddha," "Fish Eye"

HIRAYA GALLERY IS EXHIBITING "THE Mystical Planet of Modesto" featuring the impressionistic works of Fernando Modesto, a Filipino expatriate whose paintings have been featured in major art museums and private collections in Asia and Europe.

Based in Indonesia for almost two decades now, Modesto presents his self-styled religious and scientific thesis. Every creation or its perceived reality possesses a harmonious coexistence of two forces. The planet Earth is surrounded by heaven, the sea mirrors the sky, men have guardian angels and soul mates, light flashes out from darkness, balls rest in twos. Modesto calls the forces the bipolar states of reality.

He enshrines his subject through this thesis. "The Angel Peeping through the Window" shows two worlds: heaven with a huge window and a giant angel looking out to the affairs of men. "The X and Y Universe" divides the galaxy with an angel walking across a flat table where planets rest.

Modesto draws this idea of an imagined world that floats in a large ethereal space where angels romp and play. He rests his faith that within this enclosing space, chaos and control coexist.

Modesto works with oil, a wieldy medium yet perfect for an impressionist artist like him. "My paintings are a riot of colors," he says. Lemon-yellow lights up his canvases while green soothes his eyes.

"The Mystical Planet of Modesto" runs until March 15. Call 5233331.

Velasco's women, Ortega's bucolics

By Gino Dormiendo
Contributor

THE LATE-BLOOMING LYDIA VELASCO continues to astonish. Her prodigious output in recent years, predominantly paintings of women in various configurations, radiates a raw energy emanating from the center of a bold expressionist imagination totally enamored with the subject of female sensuality.

In her latest solo show, "Le Danse," (G/L, Gallery Joaquin, until Feb. 21), the quantity is a feat difficult to duplicate, considering the artist's advancing age and markedly debilitating health.

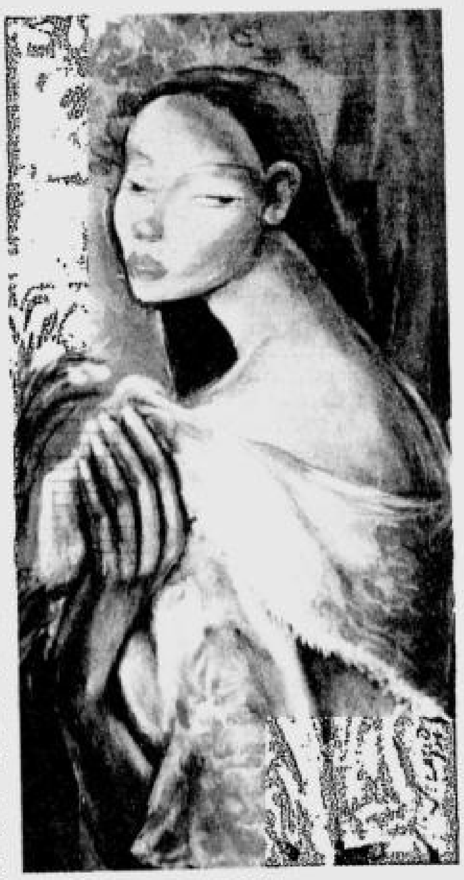
With over 30 works on display, obviously timed to coincide with the opening of the gallery's newly acquired and tastefully refurbished ground level, Velasco has both her old works and new, as proof of the artist's continuing evolution.

A virtual latecomer to the art scene, she had taken up painting to keep her occupied after her retirement. A decision she hasn't regretted as she is now besieged by collectors and gallery owners alike. (There are, to date, a dozen works that have been sold to foreign buyers, which confirms her inclusion at the Sotheby's auction in Singapore this April is no fluke.)

Part of Velasco's enduring charm can be attributed to her innate ability to render the female figure as the embodiment of the woman in her various guises and disguises, though the facial features betray a Southeast Asian countenance.

Initially perplexing even to the trained eye, the subjects seem to be the composite of East and West, traditional and modern in dress and demeanor, and yet finally emerging a character all her own, with all her vital attributes intact—bosomy chest, broad-shouldered physique and a countenance that is nothing short of alluring, seductive.

This posits a Jungian message of dual persona—half-Eros and half-Madonna—one part is the basic human lot, essential in a gender relationship, and the other a spiritual figure that licenses women to seek affirmation of their role as provider and nurturer of life.



"MARIA II," by Lydia Velasco

Ortega's sculptures

A debuting artist in sculpture has likewise surmounted the overwhelming obstacles posed by his chosen medium, presumably the most difficult to manipulate and control simply because of the attendant risks and dangers involved.

With brass, Carlito Ortega has found a material worthy of his great expectations, even if he had to labor in his studio to learn the rudiments of cutting brass sheets, fitting them to fit desired characters, and firing acetylene to give his figures a life of their own.

All these he learned via the school of hard knocks, or, more aptly, the hardy blows from his torch-machine.

A native of Maramag, Bukidnon, where he grew up in the late '60s, when the terrain was still untouched by migrants and landlords, Ortega later went to Cebu for his studies. In time, he found himself being transplanted to San Pablo, Laguna, where he finally settled to raise a family. It is on this sprawling 1½-hectare lot that he built his studio-workshop, far removed from the encumbrances of modern living.

It is while deep-neck doing brass sculptures that Ortega finally met fashion designer Patis Tesoro, who urged him to exhibit his works in her restaurant. To his amazement, buyers came and bought all the pieces on display.

And when Araceli "Chichi" Salas checked the works, she too was pleasantly surprised at her discovery: The budding artist was now ready for a solo show.

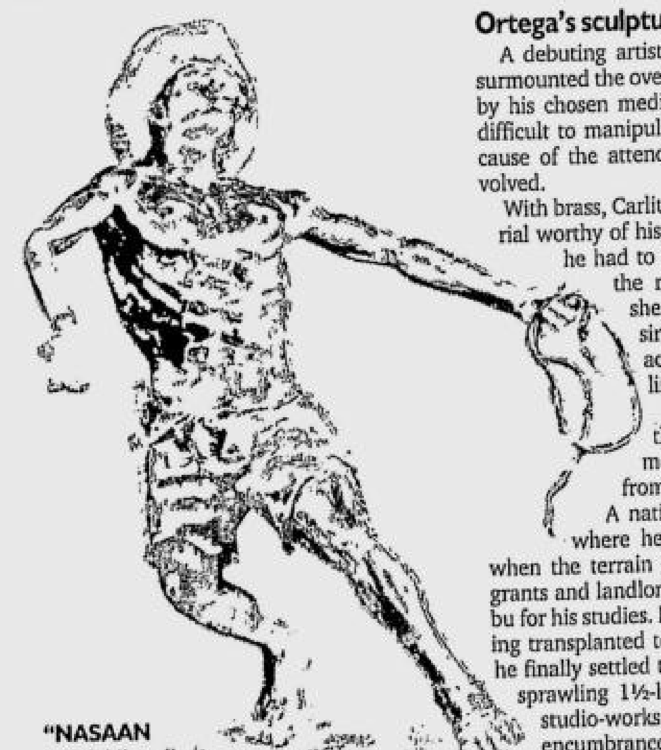
The show, "Hubog sa Apoy," (Gallery Genesis, until Feb. 21) assembles Ortega's favorite characters from his long sojourn in Bukidnon: the peasant aloft on his carabao, the pristine landscape of memory where he waded his young feet, the young boy in slumber dreaming of distant places, and many others permanently lodged in his imagination.

Hewn in brass, the pieces have a solid, sturdy, indeed, robust quality to them emanating from the artist's direct encounter with the medium and enhanced by his native facility with the shapes and nuances of rural life he had experienced.

Both man and beast are, in many works, depicted in friendly matches of strength, speed and stamina, not to mention the youthful daring on the part of the human character to tame the animal. On occasion, as in "Nangangarap," the youthful dreaming reprises Don Quixote's fight with the windmills.

Indeed, in a young mind's universe, the quintessential battle looms large and menacing, firing up Ortega's brave new world of precocious adventures and misadventures.

E-mail the author at gdormiendo@yahoo.com



"NASAAN si Kalakihan," by Carlito Ortega

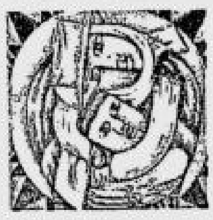
VISUAL ARTS

PACHECO in front of "The Wedding at Cana"

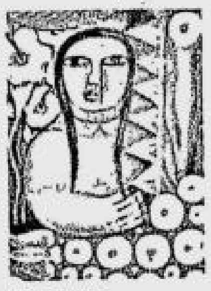
Religious paintings by Pacheco

THE AUGUSTINIAN Contemplative Nuns of San Jose del Monte, Bulacan, and the Italian Federation of the Augustinian Monasteries of Italy will present a series of paintings on the life of St. Augustine by noted finger-painting expert Rafael Pacheco of Morong, Rizal, on Feb. 26. The paintings will be on display at the church of the Augustinian Monastery of the Mother of Good Counsel, at Carmel Farms, Purok 8, Barrio Tungkong Mangga, San Jose del Monte, Bulacan.

Alvarado at Joaquin



"FATHER and Child II"

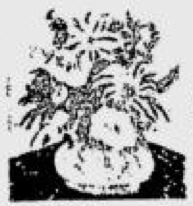


"OBJECT of Pleasure 5"

BACOLOD-BASED social realist Nunelucio Alvarado is featured in "Palangga" (Loved One) at the Centre Gallery of Galerie Joaquin Main (371 P. Guevarra St. corner Montessori Lane, Addition Hills, San Juan; tel. 7239253 or 7239418; www.galeriejoaquin.com). The show opens on Feb. 22 and features 23 romantic paintings but still depicting figures of the peasantry with squat broad mass and angular faces, Alvarado's staples. Their wide-open eyes stare intently at viewers.

Children's art contest

THE UNITED Nations Environment Programme is holding the World Environment Day children's art contest. Entries should be by children 6-14 years old. The seven winners will get a fully sponsored trip to the World Environment Day celebrations in Algiers, Algeria, on June 5, plus cash. Theme is deserts and desertification. Paintings must be done on either A4 or A3 paper; mediums are crayons, colored pencils or watercolor. Entries can be submitted via e-mail (scanned or regular mail) to the Unep office in Bangkok (sarabuddhi@un.org). Deadline is Feb. 28. View www.unep.org/tunza/paintcomp15.



"FLOWER Arrangements Against Yellow Wall"

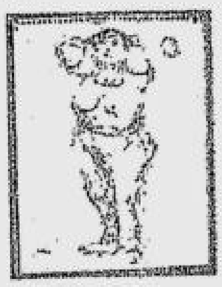
JULIUS Limpe with his painting "Mother and Child on the Terrace"

Limpe's zodiac art

JULIUS Limpe is holding his 13th solo exhibit, "From Rooster to Dog, Year 2006," at Gallery 828 in Shangri-La Plaza Mall. The fearlessly unconventional expressionist painter has mounted a collection of colorful and truly auspicious paintings of dogs, roosters, Mother and Child, a panda bear, waterfalls, and the perennial artist's favorites—fish and flowers. Dogs are shown embracing each other with affection, roosters crouching on the alert for predators, waterfalls gushing forth with intense power.

Bencab et al. at Crucible

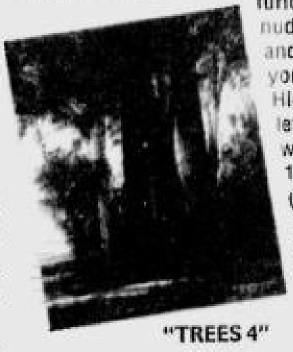
BEN CABRERA, Dan Dizon and Romi Mananquil present a group exhibit at the Crucible Gallery, 4/F, Building A, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City, until March 5. Call 6356061.



UNTITLED, by Florencio Concepcion

3 artists at Avellana

OPENING today at the Avellana Art Gallery are three simultaneous exhibits. Florencio B. Concepcion's "Once upon a Time" features snapshot sketches—characterized by fast and furious strokes—of a nude voluptuary; Lexygius Calip constructs and explores the nature of the abyss in "Beyond Words"; while Ferdinand Cacnio's "In High Spirits" presents a flurry of svelte, balletic dancers in brass poised for flight or weightlessness. Avellana Art Gallery is at A-19, 2680 F.B. Harrison St., Pasay City (fronting Gideon Academy). Call 8338357.



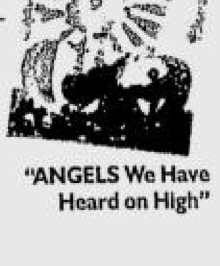
"TREES 4"

Santos at West Gallery

STEVE Santos will hold "Recent Works," Feb. 23-March 7, at West Gallery, 4/L, Building A- SM Megamall, Mandaluyong. A total of 18 paintings in black ink and watercolor will be presented in the exhibit. Call 6341284

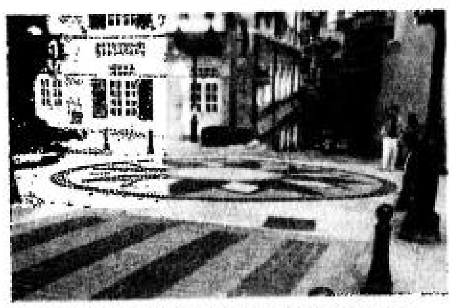
Del Rosario at Nine, Big

FARLEY del Rosario's new series of darling round-eyed, long-nosed, curlicue-armed boys and girls, which have earned praise from critics and collectors, is on display at Gallery Nine (Megamall, 6877302) and Gallery Big (Makati, 8954516). Del Rosario lends a child's wonder replete with contrasts in line and color, giving a charming twist to romantic themes.

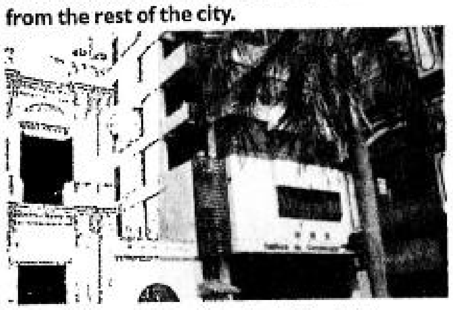


"ANGELS We Have Heard on High"

Macau's heritage surprise

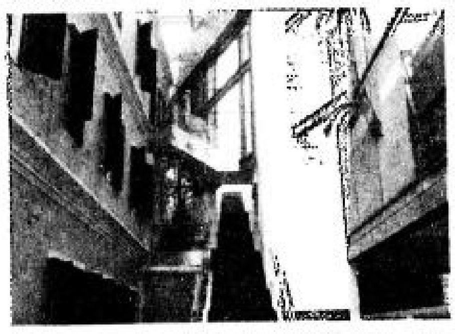


PATTERNED paving differentiates streets and sidewalks within the core historic area from the rest of the city.

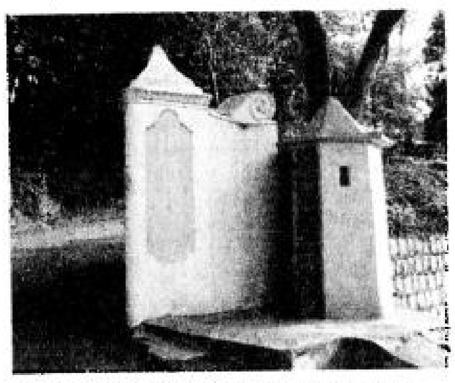


OLD and new exist side by side in total compatibility without one architectural style grabbing attention from the other.

ART Deco building from the 1930s shows how styles and eras juxtapose harmoniously as architectures of different periods were constructed in the city center.



MODERN addition by architect Cheong Cheok Kio shows how old and new are compatible.



COLORFUL park gate reminds of Macau's colonial background.

PRIDE OF PLACE

Augusto F. Villalon

MACAU COMPLETELY SURPRISED a group of architects and student-members of the United Architects of the Philippines-Makati Chapter who went on an architectural-heritage tour to the multicultural city.

Approaching the city on the drive from the airport, casino structures immediately grab attention. Huge structures compete for patrons, lighting up streets at night to daytime brightness with immense Las Vegas-style signage. Macau is, after all, among the gambling capitals of Asia and many Las Vegas casinos are setting up shop there.

The big surprise is that the glitz of Macau casinos does not outshine the charm of the city, a juxtaposition of Chinese and Portuguese colonial structures that follow the rolling of the hills in the city, whose narrow streets once opened out to promenaded shoreline boulevards. Reclamation has landlocked the former seaside boulevards as new land pushes the existing shoreline farther and farther away.

Macau is a small peninsula that includes two islands totaling 25.8 sq km, jutting off the China coast which has tripled from its original size through a constant reclamation program.

On reclaimed land rise dazzling new structures, the airport, a view tower, more casinos, convention centers, sports complexes, apartment blocks. New large-scale construction is restricted to reclaimed areas, a remarkable move that diverts development pressure from the preserved historic center of Macau that is protected from destruction by well-managed legislation.

What sets Macau apart from all other cities in the region is its five-century-long interaction between East and West which began with Macau's colonization by the Portuguese in the 16th century. The dialogue continues today despite the former colony's reversion to China.

Unique

The fusion of cultures developed a unique Macanese image and lifestyle, recognized by Unesco through its 2005 inscription of the Historic Center of Macau on the World Heritage List that cited:

"The Historic Center of Macau includes the oldest Western architectural heritage on Chinese soil today. Together with Macau's traditional Chinese architecture, it stands witness to successful East-West cultural pluralism and architectural traditions.

"The Historic Center of Macau is the product of East-West cultural exchange, constituting the most unique blend of cultural heritage existing in China's historic cities... a complete social infrastructure that has encompassed and sustained the living traditions of different cultures."

In multicultural Macau, official languages are Chinese and Portuguese. Of its 450,000 residents, 95 percent are Chinese. Only 5 percent are of Portuguese or European origins. Classical Cantonese, traditional Portuguese, and fusion Chinese-Portuguese-Macanese are the local cuisines served at tables.

Its religions are Buddhist, Taoist, Confucian and Roman Catholic. Temples stand side by side with colonial churches while Macanese regularly join each other's religious festivals.

Within the protected World Heritage area in the city center is a core zone containing a collection of over 20 individual World Heritage monuments linked by a walking path distinctively paved in cream and black stone cobbles set in a striking wave pattern.

Follow the path through the city to get to each of the World Heritage monuments which include colonial architecture (ruins, fortifications, religious buildings, civic buildings, open plazas), Chinese heritage (temples, shops, houses), cemeteries, public gardens, turn-of-the-century architecture.

Long walk

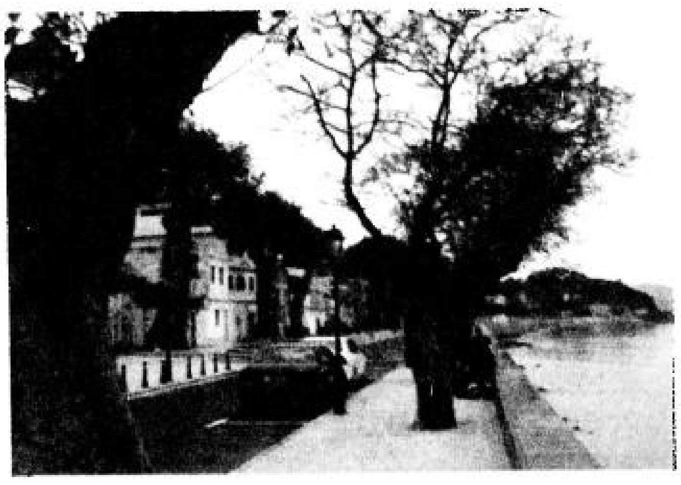
Early on a Sunday morning, the UAP Makati architects walked the cobbled path, wended through narrow streets, then up and down hills, and ended with tired feet in the late afternoon at the shoreline promenade in front of A-Ma Temple, which legend says existed before Macau came into being.

The architects started out by climbing to the hilltop Macau Museum, built into the ruins of Macau Fort next to the iconic ruins of St. Paul's Church, where Alorino Noruega, public relations officer of the Macau Government Tourism Office, joined them to provide information on the historical background of Macau.

Cheong Cheok Kio, heads of the Cultural Heritage Department of the Macau Cultural Institute, and his colleague Angie Wong, led the UAP delegation through the stunning historic center impeccably restored by their institute.

The Cultural Institute has successfully restored the colonial Leal Senado building, still used as the city's Municipal Chamber building, retaining the old meeting room, elaborate library and garden.

Also restored were surviving parts of the old city walls, Catholic churches from the colonial era, temples, Chinese houses now converted into museums, and an outstanding series of open public spaces that green the congested city center.



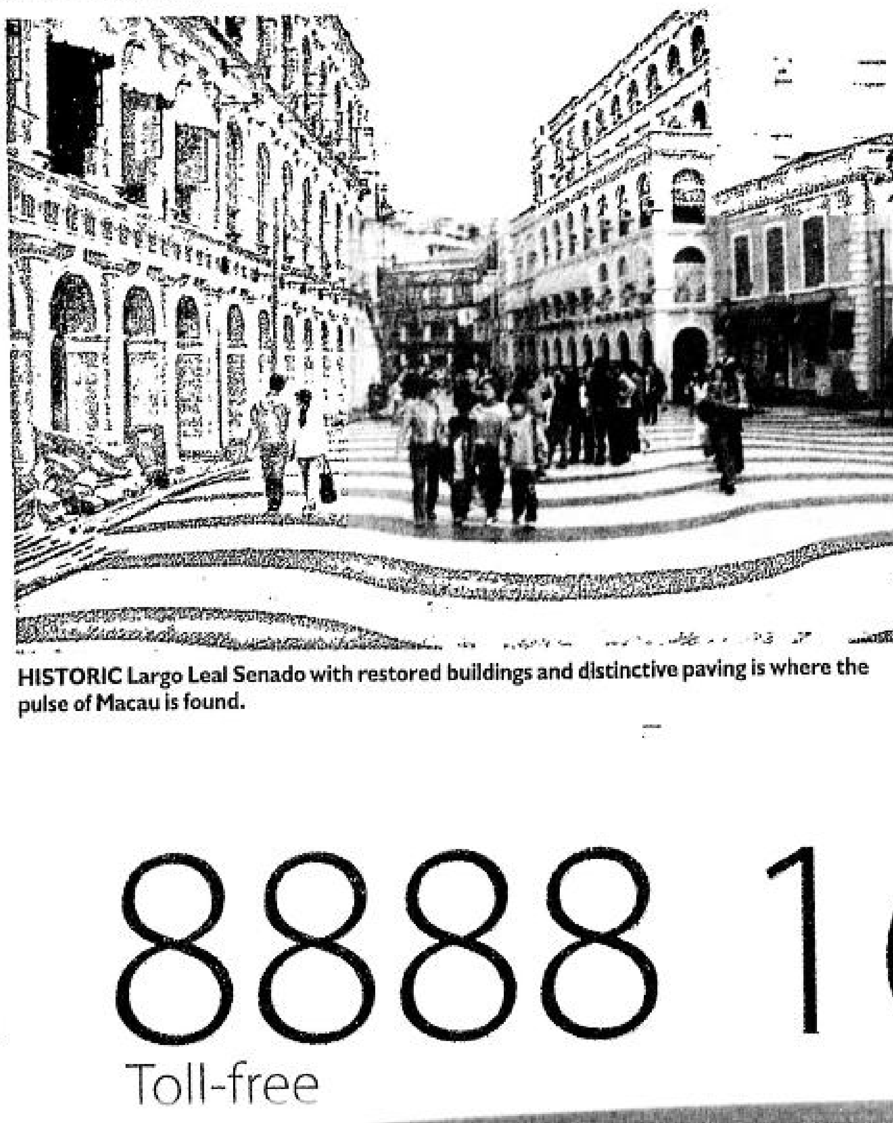
ON TAIPA Island is a secluded beach promenade, a rare image of old Macau.

The UAP architects were taken to a job site to observe restoration work in progress, introducing non-restoration architects to the time-consuming complexity of restoring an old structure by using original construction techniques and authentic materials.

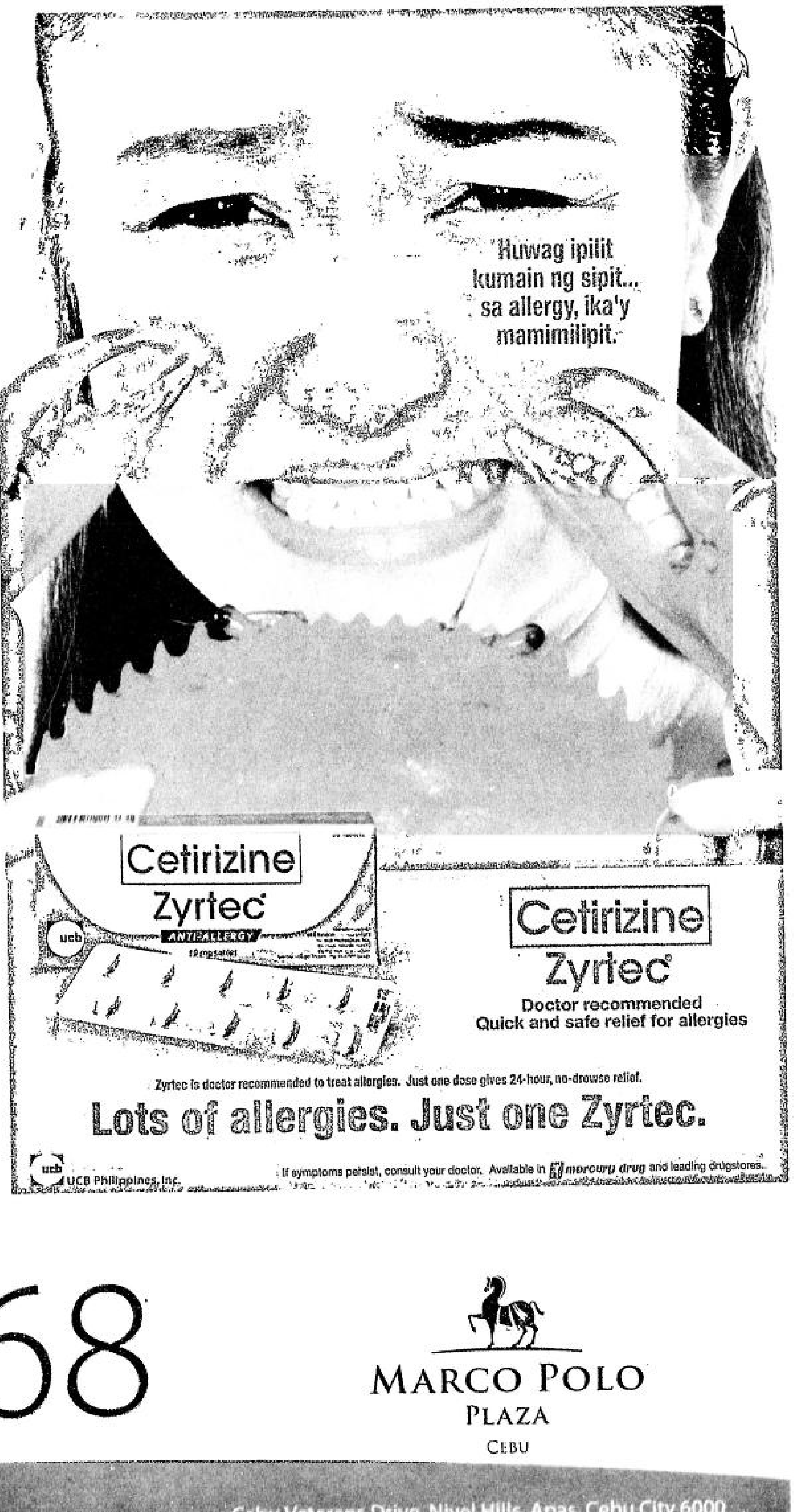
Macau went beyond providing the UAP group a heritage tour. It charmed everyone and brought back great memories and first-hand experience of how the modern and historic worlds blended perfectly, enhancing contemporary lifestyle and giving an identity to Macau that sets it part from all other cities in the world.

The Macau Government Tourism Office provides visitor information for Macau (tel. 8139047). G&S Travel provides air and land arrangements (tel. 6360895 or 6332407).

Feedback is welcome at afvillalon@hotmail.com



HISTORIC Largo Leal Senado with restored buildings and distinctive paving is where the pulse of Macau is found.



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The untold story of 'Geisha'

From page C1

ing of the geisha world so completely, I came home and threw away my entire first draft and started over," he says. Emerging from this rebirth was the story of Chiyo, the girl with blue-gray eyes, who would come of age as Sayuri.

It would take three more years before the book's second incarnation would emerge. But the publishers found the manuscript quite dull. "Naturally, I'd felt intimidated at the thought of impersonating a geisha, and I'd chosen to remain on safe terrain by writing a novel narrated in the third person. What was more, I'd conceived of the novel as focusing on five years in the life of an adult geisha shortly after World War II, even though most of the drama in her life—I now realized—would have been in her childhood. In the end, I threw away this second draft and started yet again."

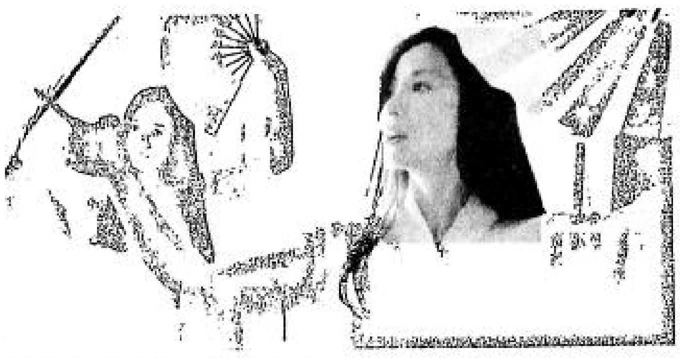
It took six years, but he finally finished the novel, his first, in 1994. "Memoirs of a Geisha" came out in 1997. Like the stirring of the shamisen's strings, the novel's music enchanted audiences with its bold beauty, selling millions and being translated into over 30 different languages. "Quite astonishing! I can't think of a better answer than that. Even now, eight years after the novel first came out, it all seems a little surreal to me."

When work on transforming his novel into a movie began, Golden made suggestions on the screenplay by Robin Swicord. "I also steered the producers to a woman named Liza Dalby, the only non-Japanese ever to become a geisha," he adds, "and suggested they hire her as a consultant, which they did."

The cast, including Ken Watanabe (Chairman), Michelle Yeoh (Mameha) and Gong Li (Hatsumomo), were excellent, he says. "I'm pleased that the book is now known to a wider audience than before," Golden says of the movie's impending opening. "And watching the production as it moved along has proven to be quite an education. It was fun, too, to meet so many talented people and watch them as they worked."

KEN Watanabe (right) plays the Chairman

NOVELIST Arthur Golden



MICHELLE Yeoh plays Mameha, the geisha mentor

Controversial

While "Geisha" beguiled international readers, it has not been free of controversy. First came a former geisha claiming that the character Sayuri was actually her, an allegation Golden denies: "The idea that the book is based on the life of an actual woman strikes me as puzzling. Real life doesn't imitate fiction; it isn't so neat or clear. Anyone who looks closely at the various contrivances in the book—most of which I went to considerable trouble to keep hidden—will see clearly that the character is an invention."

More recently, there has been a furor over Chinese actors playing Japanese parts. "I'm not sure what the controversy is about," he states. "Hugh Grant, an Englishman, plays Americans all the time. Russell Crowe, an Australian, plays Englishmen. Why is it any different if a Chinese portrays a Japanese, or vice versa? The only important question is: was the portrayal convincing?"

Even as he observes the movie's opening on screens worldwide, Golden, who lives in Massachusetts with wife Trudy and two children, is now finishing his next book, "about a young man who starts off in Amsterdam during the 1850s and 1860s, comes to the US at the age of 17, and ends up a very successful businessman. It's quite a different novel from 'Memoirs of a Geisha,' but told in a similarly intimate first-person voice."

A capacity for beauty amid adversity and a deep devotion to the past: this is why the geisha endure. " Nowadays geisha are something of an anachronism, of course. They continue to exist mainly because wealthy Japanese—just like the wealthy anywhere—still appreciate old-world customs," he explains. It is like remembering blossoms in a wasteland, and a quality that, in "Memoirs of a Geisha," Arthur Golden never forgot: "Geisha seem so mysterious to non-Japanese, I think, partly because there are few things like them outside Japan."

Columbia Pictures' "Memoirs of a Geisha" opens in Metro Manila theaters on Feb. 22.

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Trumpets launches Musicademy

AFTER SUCCESSFULLY ESTABLISHING Playshop as the leading multimedia summer workshop in the country today, Trumpets now launches an exciting new concept for auxiliary education—a year-round music, language and speech school called Musicademy, with Asia's pop idol, Christian Bautista, as endorser.

Maximize learning and growth with Musicademy's personalized programs where you can choose your own courses, schedules and one-on-one training.

Among the courses to choose from are fundamental vocal techniques, singing styles (Broadway, classical, pop, R&B and rock), competitive singing and song interpretation. Also, learn how to play musical instruments with lessons in piano, guitar, violin, flute and *kahon*.

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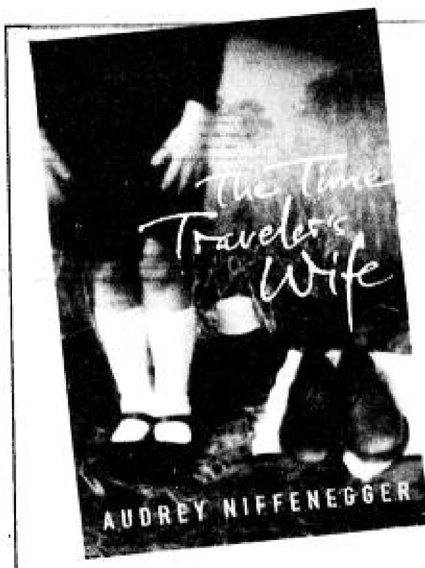
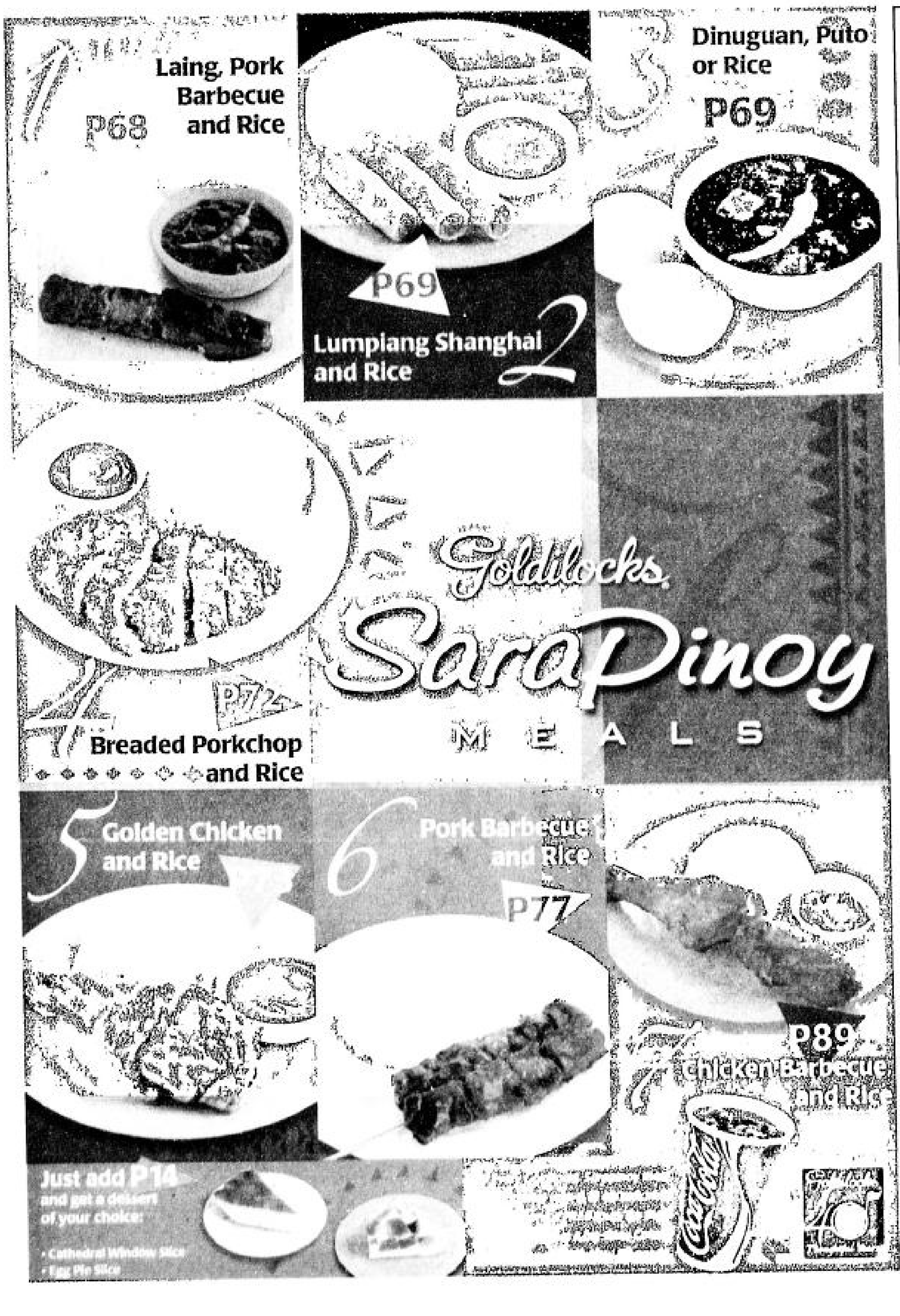




40 years of capturing the true Filipino Taste

Goldilocks in the Philippines is not just a fairytale character; it is a storied Pinoy icon deeply ingrained in the Filipino psyche. Now celebrating its fourth decade, it has built up a store of fond memories, and every family has a favorite Goldilocks story to tell. From children today to their parents who grew up with Goldilocks- even to the grandparents who were there from the start- Goldilocks crosses generations.

Apart from an uncompromising commitment to total customer satisfaction, Goldilocks continues to develop new products and innovations, keeping it at the forefront of the industry. From an initial offering of rolls, chiffon slices, and pastries, the country's number one bakeshop pioneered the concept of the "celebration cake", which includes toys or figures as part of the decoration. Equipped with the same dedication and superior standards, Goldilocks then moved on to full meal and merienda choices via its food shop operations.

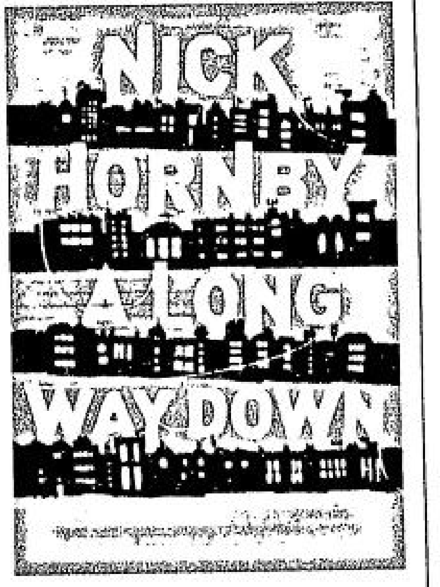
"We have an incredible synergy between our bakeshop and food shop menu", said Mauie Tamsi, Goldilocks Marketing Manager for Foodshop Operations. "A Filipino can have the same affinity and longing for a Goldilocks mamon as they do for our pansit palabok, lumpiang shanghai, or barbeque", she added. "These dishes go beyond taste - they evoke good memories, celebrations, and the uniqueness of Pinoy life". Ms. Tamsi further enthused.

Precisely because of this viewpoint, most Filipinos consider Goldilocks not only as a brand, but a Filipino institution. In order to better reflect this transcendence, their popular tagline "How thoughtful, how Goldilocks" actually evolved to "How thoughtful, how Pinoy". This new tag embraces the tradition that goes beyond Goldilocks, yet keeps in mind the fact that Goldilocks is indeed Pinoy.

"We treasure the strong bond between Goldilocks and the Filipino, so we make it a priority to uphold and nurture it", continued Ms. Tamsi. "Our SaraPinoy meals, for example, combines the fondness for traditional Filipino dishes with value-for-money", she explained. SaraPinoy includes such favorites as laing, pork barbeque, and dinuguan at puto, bundled into affordable and delicious meal combos.

"With each Goldilocks SaraPinoy meal you enjoy, you are not merely getting a scrumptious dish - you get a taste of something truly Pinoy", Ms. Tamsi concluded.

ADVT



Book club tackles Hornby, Niffeneger novels

THE POWER BOOK CLUB TACKLES two thought-provoking novels, "A Long Way Down" and "The Time Traveler's Wife," by best-selling authors Nick Hornby and Audrey Niffenegger, respectively, at PowerBooks Greenbelt and Megamall.

Hornby's "A Long Way Down" delves deep into the psyches and hearts of four lost souls who connect just when they think they've reached the end of the line. Martin, JJ, Jess and Maureen are four strangers who meet on the roof of a London destination famous for being the last stop for people who want to end their lives.

"The Time Traveler's Wife" by the critically acclaimed Niffenegger is a hip, urban love story that unravels a bizarre flaw in the life of an otherwise normal couple.

"A Long Way Down" will be discussed on Feb. 21, 6:30 p.m., at PowerBooks Greenbelt. "The Time Traveler's Wife" will be discussed on Feb. 22, 6:30 p.m., at PowerBooks Megamall.

As a special treat, the first eight Powercard holders who are not yet Book Club members, get the featured book for free.

PowerBooks Specialty Store is at Greenbelt 4 (7576428 to 29), Megamall (6352898 to 99), Alabang Town Center (8505662 to 63), Glorietta (7527075), Shangri-La (6380023/25) and Robinsons Place Ermita (5233334/5243448).